

Ethnic Politics and the Saxon Colonization of Medieval Hungarian Transylvania

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by

George Andrei

The Ohio State University

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Project Advisor: Professor Nicholas Breyfogle, Department of History

## Introduction

This honors thesis is a study of the interconnections of ethnicity and empire-building during the high and the early late medieval periods of the Kingdom of Hungary (~1150-1300 AD). It closely follows the integration of eastern Transylvania by the central authorities of Hungary through means of colonization. Using foreign settlers, predominantly western Europeans, the Hungarian authorities were able to suture this region of Transylvania to the Hungarian state apparatus. These settlers, first arriving in the middle of the XII century, established settlements that would develop into major regional centers of trade, administration, Christianity, and defense. They created for Hungary a “native” administrative structure, one that was local and self-ruling, through which to extend the kingdom’s rule over the lands and peoples of the region. These newly integrated apparatuses and peoples of Transylvania later decisively sustained Hungary by providing revenue (through taxation) and soldiers for it in the years of crisis following the Mongol invasion of 1241-1242, which had crippled the kingdom economically, martially, and structurally.

The help of these Transylvanian populations proved indispensable to Hungary to fend off opportunistic neighbors and maintain some semblance of centralized stability not only in Transylvania, but also across the kingdom. This thesis is an analysis of medieval governmental policy in regard to the various people groups of the kingdom, and specifically, Transylvania. As so much of this policy was specific to separate people groups, I argue that the state utilized a form of medieval “ethnic” policy in its administration of these regions, which were 1) separated by great distance from the central administration and 2) distinct in the composition of their population from those areas under the control of the central monarchical authorities. I use decrees, land grants, golden bulls, and other medieval contemporary documents to establish a link between the nature

of Hungarian expansion eastward through colonization and the “proto-ethnic” foundations of the policies of both the central authorities and the local *voivodal*<sup>1</sup> administration.

The nature of the relationship between the settlers in eastern Transylvania and the organs of state power, whether they be local, voivodal power, or national, monarchical power, was most often one of social privilege. The authorities granted the settlers extensive rights and privileges based on the concept of ethnicity, albeit one adjusted to the medieval, rather than modern, concept of “otherness.” These privileges were granted in exchange for their settlement both on royally-sanctioned land in the region and on lands directly under the rule of the *voivode* (local governor) and the Bishopric of Transylvania.

This study explores the general idea of the “other.” Issues of ethnicity, ethnic policy and arguments of the history of Transylvania have sparked conflict throughout Transylvania, spanning centuries of its history. The settlement and subsequent policies dictated by ethno-regional groups of the early history of the people groups (Hungarians, Saxons, Romanians, Szeklers) is an important step in the building of centuries of internal and foreign policy of the various states which have since ruled the regions. The interactions between these ethnic groups spans from the very beginning of the period covered in this thesis, to today. From massacres, rebellions, revolutions, to full-blown war between states, the ethnic groups of Transylvania have had a tremendous impact not solely on Transylvania, but the whole greater region of east-central Europe. It is this legacy, which makes the beginning of these interactions worth studying.

### Medieval Hungary

Like most other states in the high medieval period,<sup>2</sup> the Kingdom of Hungary was a monarchy in transition. The office of king was anything but absolute: it derived its power from its

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<sup>1</sup> The voivode was the local “governor” of Transylvania. He was appointed directly by the king.

<sup>2</sup> ~1000-1250

own centers, but also predominantly relied on the loyalty of the nobility to keep the country together. Like other early Eastern European Christian monarchies (namely Poland and Kievan Rus'), secular power was loosely held and in constant re-shuffle as a result of the internal struggles for it. In Hungary, this power manifested in the forms of counts serving the king; however, the counts were not tied by vassalage, nor granted rewards in exchange for service to the monarch. Instead, the titular noble received a portion of the income from the royally owned lands in the county, which historian Thomas Ertman claims amounted to around a third of the total royal income from his respective county. This secular system of power had many similarities with the Catholic hierarchy, which employed a similar relationship between bishops and pope. These similarities are due to the relative infancy of the kingdom itself, as it relied on borrowing heavily from western institutions in order to build its administrative apparatuses. In terms of the central administrative structure, the Hungarian kingdom developed its methods by applying the Carolingian standards already established to its west, whereby the high officials of the royal household concurrently also served as the high officials of the central administrative system.<sup>3</sup>

The formative years of Hungary, those after the crowning of St. Stephen as king in 1000 AD, began with large-scale centralization campaigns. King St. Stephen worked to disestablish the tribal and clan system. The lands previously controlled by the old Magyar tribes of the pre-Christian era became possessions of the royal household, which, at its peak, totaled roughly three fourths of the entire realm. It was during this period, in the first half of the XI century, following Stephen's abolishment of the tribes, that royal authority of the Árpád dynasty reached its apogee. The situation was not the same, however, by the time of the XIII century, as royal authority would soon head into a crisis due to the policies of Stephen's successors. The constant decline began in

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 269-271.

force after the ascension of King Andrew II in 1196. Civil wars, fought over the right to succession, not only devastated the royal domains, but also ruined royal authority, due to the massive land grants necessary for Andrew to win support from the aristocracy. This need for aristocratic support by the monarchs was *causa sui*, such that as more land was given away, the more the monarch relied on aristocratic support to sustain himself, in return necessitating more grants. This situation quickly developed into a vicious cycle, leading the Hungarian monarchs to seek support from other groups, such as the ethno-regional groups on its eastern periphery (Vlachs, Pechenegs, Cumans, and Saxons), in order to contest the growing power of the baronial class, particularly in the more difficult to rule peripheries.<sup>4</sup>

Administratively and socio-economically, much of Hungary, particularly by the XII and XIII centuries, was in the hands of the “baronial” class. This class of aristocracy represented the highest echelons of Hungarian feudal society and differentiated itself from other nobility in that they were “true” nobility. Their rights to aristocracy did not come via land grants or in exchange for services, but from their ancestry. It was under pressure from the barons that King Andrew II was forced to recognize the distinction between this baronial and the other noble class, the martial, or “knightly,” class in 1217. Always causing trouble for the crown, the baronial class had their own, personal, interests to follow, specifically in the realm of autonomy and distancing oneself from royal authority. The barons did not view their loyalty to the crown as given, but rather conditional on their relationship to the kings of Hungary. It was they who had to approve the royal heir, given the elective nature of the medieval Hungarian monarchy. This class of aristocracy was among the greatest dangers for any Hungarian monarch, and many of the efforts of the Hungarian

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 271.

rulers were spent appeasing or fighting them in an endless tug-of-war match. Such was the greater political situation of Hungary in the XII and XIII centuries.<sup>5</sup>

### Transylvania and Eastern Ambitions

To the Hungarian monarchs, control of the geographical region of Transylvania likely meant a multitude of things. Apart from the economic benefits of the royal revenues on mining and farming in the region, the region had great importance geo-politically. Easy to defend and serving as a launch pad for invasions to the east, medieval Transylvania straddled the eastern and southern peaks of the Carpathian Mountains. Transylvania was important, as access to and from it depended on a few mountain passes, easily controlled with only a small force. Administratively, most of its territory in the west was controlled in a manner similar to the rest of Hungary: mostly noble rule, but also a few free cities, and much of the region was administered ecclesiastically through the Bishopric of Transylvania (see Map 1).



Map 1: The extent of the Bishopric of Transylvania. Notice that the Porvostship of Cibinium (Szeben) is under obligation directly to the Archbishopric of Strigonium. This map includes all of Transylvania, including the Burzenland, thus, it represents Transylvania sometime after 1225.

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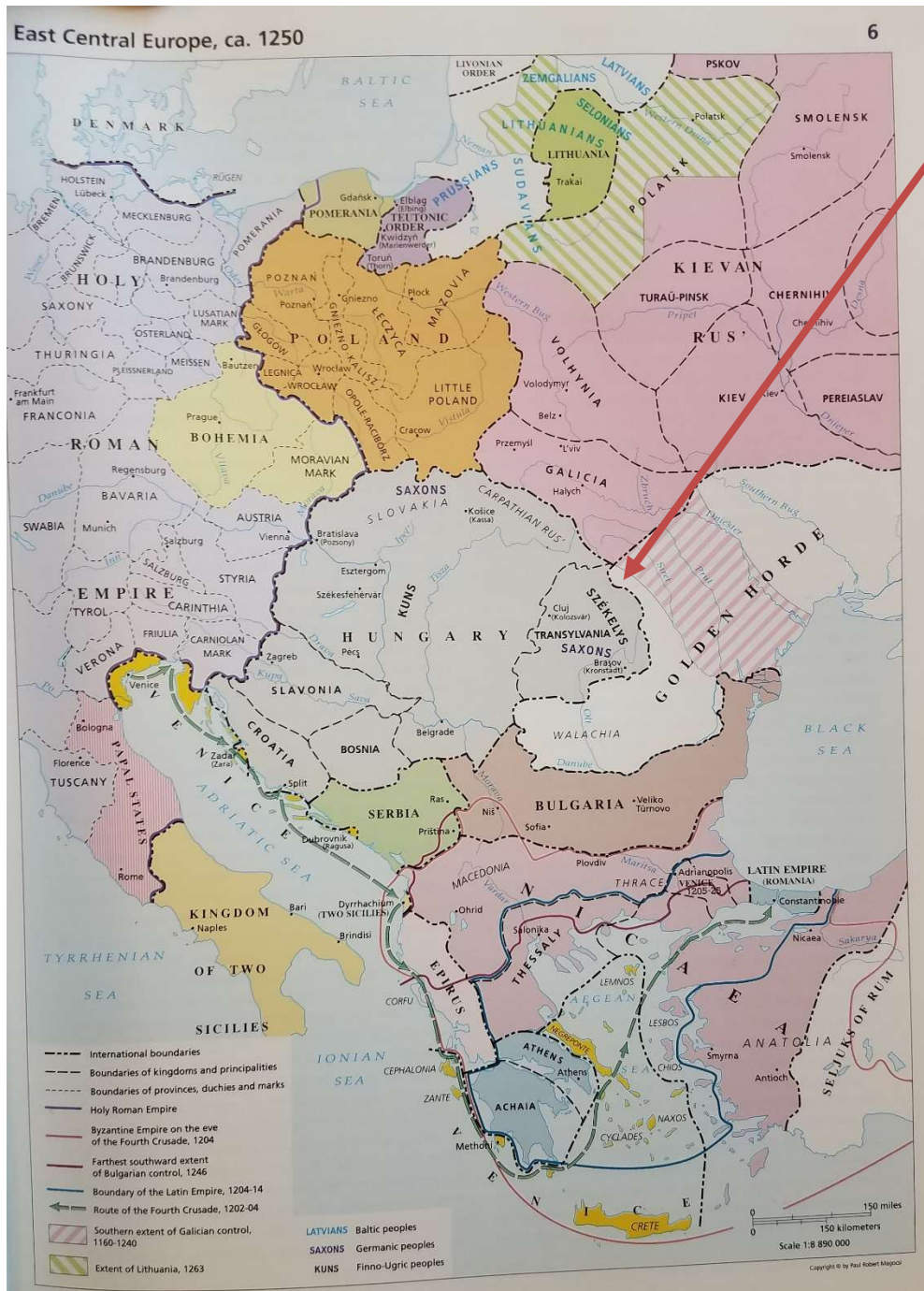
<sup>5</sup> Bryan Cartledge, *The Will to Survive: A History of Hungary* (London: Timewell Press, 2006), 20, 23.

<sup>6</sup> CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=9291447>

It was in the best interests of Hungary's rulers to keep eastern Transylvania from falling into the hands of possibly rebellious barons. This area of Transylvania was key to the ambitions of the monarchs, particularly in terms of expansion, as it was essentially a gateway between east and west. Hungary, under King Andrew II, became interested in expansion of its authority to the east, and was the first state to take up arms and participate in the 5th Crusade during the period of 1217-1218. The crusading army returned in 1218, having defeated a Muslim army but otherwise accomplishing nothing, particularly after it made no contribution to Andrew's chance to claim the Byzantine throne, the entire reason for Andrew's adventures in the Holy Land.<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, the event only served to strengthen the trending Hungarian preoccupation with easterly exansion in the early centuries of the second millenium. Their concerns would remain external, but an internal component to this expansion also emerged in the XII century: the consolidation of the Transylvanian land along the Carpathian ridge (See Map 2).

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<sup>7</sup> Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan*, 272; and Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 21.



Map 2: This map shows Hungary, ca. 1250. Transylvania is shown segmented, with its eastern and southern border following the crest of the Carpathian Mountains.

It was the role of western colonists, who settled eastern Transylvania beginning in the XII century, to shift the frontier eastward. While Andrew II was perhaps the most ambitious in his

<sup>8</sup>Paul Robert Magocsi, "East Central Europe, Ca. 1250," *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe* (University of Washington Press, 1993), 6.



dreams of power in the east, many other Hungarian monarchs showed similar interests. In fact, the Hungarian interest in the east was established over half a century earlier, during the reign of Géza II, in the middle of the XII century, with his call for western colonists to come and settle the Hungarian eastern frontier zone of Transylvania. What exactly composed Transylvania in the scope of this essay? This question is interesting because of the way that the eastern borderlands of the Hungarian kingdom worked: there were no strict borders or lines of demarcation. Nora Berend writes that Hungary's eastern border was a frontier. There were no clearly defined border lines, and only geographical formations proved to be any markers of deliniation, as opposed to the western border with the German states, which were clearly defined by feudal territories.<sup>9</sup> This analysis, however, only answers the question of where the frontier ended, but where did it begin? Albensis, the seat of the Transylvanian bishop, would be a fair starting point, due to its easterly position in regard to other centers in Transylvania at the time, as its properties to the east would be difficult to establish.

The main focus in this study of this eastern Hungarian frontier and its impact lies mostly within the period of roughly 1150 to 1308. A great number of kings ruled Hungary during this time, and an even greater number of other people served as chief ecclesiastical figures, voivodes, dukes, and other positions of importance in Transylvania. The main players, however, were the kings Andrew II, Béla IV, Stephen V, and Ladislas IV (the Cuman).<sup>10</sup> It was during the rule of these four kings that the majority of policies, events, and outcomes to be described occurred. All struggled to maintain central authority over the Transylvanian periphery, often through their use of "ethnic" policies. Through the *Diploma Andreanum* (1224), Andrew II established a county

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<sup>9</sup> Nora Berend, *At the Gates of Christendom: Jews, Muslims and 'Pagans' in Medieval Hungary, c. 1000-c.1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 25.

<sup>10</sup> Please see Appendix B for the ruler's reigns.

specifically for the settlers, as well as outlined their of rights, privileges, and obligations. It is this document that reveals the settlers as a privileged population. As time goes on, the documents of the proceeding kings continue to confirm the original document (the *Diploma Andreanum*), affirming the rights of these settlers, while at the same time demanding more and more of the other ethno-regional groups of eastern Transylvania. It is the rule of these four, which I believe shows the ethnically-driven nature of official policy in medieval Transylvania.

### The “Guests”

The Hungarian kings invited settlers in the mid XII century to accomplish the task of incorporating Transylvania. In the early documents, they are referred to by administrators as “hospites,” guests. So, who exactly were these “guests?” In other documents, both Hungarian and foreign, they are referred to by two other names: “Saxons” and “Teutons.” All three of these names refer to the same group: the western settlers. Most of these settlers came from the German-speaking areas of the Rhine-Moselle region, but considerable amounts were also from what are today the Low Countries, among them speakers of local Latin-based languages such as Walloon.

The Saxons were not an ethnic group in the modern sense, because they did not constitute a singular group, but an amalgamation of many various ethno-regional groups: they were a singular entity only in the eyes of the groups surrounding them in Transylvania. Kings and other administrators consistently referred to them as a singular group in the documents of the time, due to language differences between them and the Hungarians and peoples of Transylvania, but also by their status as “hospites.”

The Saxons were a diverse group. Many were German-speakers from the area that previously served as the heart of Lothair’s middle kingdom.<sup>11</sup> This connection between the Saxons

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<sup>11</sup> Karl Kurt Klein, *Luxemburg und Siebenbürgen* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1966), 4.

of Transylvania and the Luxembourgers was first postulated in 1768 by Luxembourger Franz Xaver de Feller.<sup>12</sup> His theory is based on the language similarities, which indicate an earlier relationship to one another. These were mainly speakers of Frankonian, Flemish, and Walloon dialects, who left their perspective regions at a time when floods devastated the area, killing thousands and drowning entire communities, while in other areas social disturbances, such as the emergence of feudalism and the domination of the regional Prince-Bishops, pushed many out of their lands and towns.<sup>13</sup> According to Thomas Nögler, those who came to Transylvania answered the call for settlers and represented a mixed lot: poor farmers, who left their flooded homes, desperate for a new start after their lands had been claimed by the sea or by the newly developing feudal system; burghers, whose home cities' lack of rights, thanks to the rise of the ecclesiastical polities in the region, drove them to find other residences; and even nobles, who were looking to establish their own domains after being, often times, evicted or pushed out through feudal power struggles for precious land.<sup>14</sup>

The settlement of the Saxons began as a method to expand Hungarian authority into their outer Transylvanian territories, and thus, to incorporate them into playing an active role in the empire. This overture was successful, as it established a base, from which to facilitate the reining in of the rest of the Transylvanian frontier. These initial settlements allowed for new settlements to be established in a chain reaction, as many of the later Saxon settlers, moving to other regions of Transylvania, came not from their ancestral homelands in the Hohenstaufen Empire, but from the County of Cibinium. Not long after the first settlements in south-eastern Transylvania were

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>13</sup> Georg Daniel Teutsch, *Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen für das sächsische Volk: 1. Band: Von den ältesten Zeiten bis 1699*, vol. 1 of *Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen für das sächsische Volk* (Hermannstadt: W. Krafft, 1925), 16.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Nögler, *Așezarea sașilor în Transilvania și aportul lor la dezvoltarea societății feudale românești*, in *Studii de istorie a naționalității germane și a înfrățirii ei cu națiunea română* (București: Editura Politică, 1976), 31; and Teutsch, *Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, 16-17.

laid down, King Andrew II commissioned the Teutonic Knights, also comprised of Germans, fresh from their escapades in the Holy Lands, to protect the new settlements and the eastern frontier by establishing themselves to the east of the new settlements, around what is today Braşov County, Romania. This experiment proved to be a failure, as the Teutonic Order overstepped their privileges by erecting unsanctioned, stone fortresses and were evicted from Transylvania by Andrew II by force. The methods of Saxon colonization, however, continued to spread like a chain from their original bases along the northern face of the southern Carpathian mountain range. Soon after their inception, the colonies brought parts of Transylvania into the Hungarian state apparatus, and importantly enveloped the Pechenegs and Vlachs definitively into the empire. Politics in the region, as a result of the effectiveness of the Saxon settlements and the resources in manpower and taxation, to which they held the key, were critical for the stability of the region and its participation in the empire. Thus, the Saxons became the prize of Transylvania, all starting with a few small colonies.

### The Hosts

The lands that the Saxon colonists came to settle had previously been inhabited by a range of peoples, their origins as numerous and diverse as the number of groups themselves. There were, however, what I will call the “big three,” the largest and most influential groups in the area at the time of the Saxon settlement: the Pechenegs, the Szeklers, and the Vlachs. Of the three, the Pechenegs appear least frequently in administrative documents, appearing only every now and then, almost always alongside the Vlachs. A historian of early Eastern Europe may recognize the name of this group, as it represented the western-most remnants of the Pecheneg Khanate, which terrorized early Rus’. The Pechenegs, alongside the Vlachs, were distanced not only spatially from the Hungarian administrative centers, but also geographically and ecologically, as their

communities were mostly established in the highlands and beech forests of Transylvania, the lower limit of which are at about 600m above sea level.<sup>15</sup>

The Szeklers, were another ethnic group already under Hungarian rule by the time of the arrival of the Saxon settlers in the XII century. Today they are prevalent in Central Romania, in the counties of Covasna, Harghita, and Mureș. They have a much more disputed origin. Through the course of my research, I have read that they were Turks, Huns, and an offshoot branch of early Hungarians. For the purpose of this essay, I will introduce them by saying they had already had an active, martial role in the empire by the time of the Saxon migrations to Transylvania, and thus, were part of the state apparatus.

Most important, however, for this essay in its examination of the effects of the colonization policy and the presence of the Saxons in south-eastern Transylvania, are the Vlachs.

The Vlachs, a people of Eastern and South-eastern Europe, spoke a language derived from vulgar Latin. In Hungarian documents of the time, they are referred to as “blaccorum” and “olahorum.” The term was later changed via German to the term “Vlach,” from which the name “Wallachia” emerged. In most historiography, whether in English, German, Hungarian, or Romanian, they are referred to as Romanians. But it is for the same reasons that I have chosen to call the Saxons “Saxons,” instead of simply Germans, that I will refer to this group continuously as Vlachs: this is how they appear in the contemporary medieval documents. This group would come to become an important resource, martially and financially, for the Kingdom of Hungary after the settlement of the Saxons, and thus, I believe that they are worth covering in this essay, as the Saxon colonization is what incorporated this group into the Hungarian empire.

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<sup>15</sup> Ioan-Aurel Pop, *Romanians and Hungarians from the 9th to the 14th Century: The Genesis of the Transylvanian Medieval State*, trans. Cristine Filea and Veronica Csorvási, (Cluj-Napoca: Centrul de Studii Transilvane, Fundația Culturală Română, 1996), 174-175.

In order to further pursue the topic at hand, I must first introduce the theories of the ideas which I am utilizing in this work: those of “empire” and “ethnicity.” I will define them both broadly and then integrate them into the topic at hand: medieval Hungary and medieval intellectual theory.

### Empire

The medieval Hungarian kingdom was a multi-ethnic empire. Historians often see imperialism and ethnicity as words that reflect the modern era and their meanings are as diverse as the fields in which they are discussed. As imperialism stems from empire, one may start with the definition of the term “empire.” According to Michael W. Doyle:

Empire, then, is the relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be achieved by force, by political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence.<sup>16</sup>

It is often the case though, that the periphery is not made up of a political entity, as Doyle describes it, but simply of communities of people. This political control manifests itself as influence either over domestic policy, foreign policy, or both. The resulting “imperial cluster” is foreign control over the sovereignty of the peripheral political entity. When this relationship encompasses both domestic and international politics, it is empire. Empire can be dissected further into five dimensions, according to Doyle, these being: the “population affected,” the “scope,” “range,” “weight,” and “duration” of the relationship.<sup>17</sup>

To paraphrase, a metropole extends its control over a peripheral political entity, which, for one reason or another, has a divided government, an undifferentiated economy, and lacks a singular political loyalty. These factors create weakness in the peripheral polities and result in opportunity

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<sup>16</sup> Michael W. Doyle, *Empires*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 45.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 12, 19, 34, 35, 44.

for the metropole. The peripheral polities thus become “imperialized peripheries.” There are many factors that encourage this relationship between metropole and periphery, such as economic and martial (in the most often used colloquial definition of imperialism), but one must also figure in the political, social, and cultural impacts that build bonds between these originally separate polities.<sup>18</sup>

Doyle formulates these ideas in the following way: metrocentric, pericentric, and systematic perspectives. The metrocentric group of theories argue, that the factors contributing to imperialism originate in the metropole. The three champions of the metrocentric group, John Hobson, V. I. Lenin, and Joseph Schumpeter, all agree with one another that imperialism animates itself in the metropole, by arguing, respectively, that imperialism is the result of special interests from financiers (imperialism through annexation; formal imperialism), the result of the monopoly stage of capitalism (control through influence; informal), and the result of objectless forcible expansion by the metropole, inspired by the militaristic institutions of the metropole.<sup>19</sup>

A pericentric view developed in opposition to the metrocentric. The pericentric side argues that the factors for imperial expansion originate in the periphery: that imperialism is the result of forces acting to destabilize the peripheral polity, leading to a pull factor for the metropole to expand its control over the peripheral polity. J. Gallagher and R. Robinson, for example, argue that the relationships of empire vary and constantly shift, but that the rule in the periphery is only possible through the will and/or collaboration of at least part of the peripheral political entity (in the case of Gallagher and Robinson, they examined the indigenous elite as a source for collaboration). Ernest Badian also makes a similar, pericentric case for the Roman control of Greece as “protector,” arguing that the Roman imperial interest in Greece emerged thanks to the instability

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 22-24.

of the Greek city states at the time, which was disturbing the Roman international law in an manner unacceptable to the Romans. The last pericentric perspective this introduction will cover is the “frontier problem.” This peripheral factor occurs when the border regions of the metropole are considered threatened by the peripheral polities, and a “buffer zone” needs to be established. It is a precautionary defensive measure in regard to the metropole, arising from the periphery.<sup>20</sup>

Lastly, challenging both metrocentric and pericentric approaches to the study of imperialism is the systematic perspective, which argues for the “Realist” model, based on the theory of international power politics: great differences in power, whether from the strength of the metropole or the weakness of the periphery, provide opportunities for the expansion of the metropole and the creation of empire. Using this model, Kenneth Waltz states that motives for empire-building vary, but that there exist three general surpluses that metropolises seek to obtain: people, goods, and capital. He argues that empire arises due to a gross imbalance of power and where the conditions allow for rule and profit through export, the more capable can exert influence over those who cannot produce as much surplus.<sup>21</sup> It is the instrument of rule and its implementation that is most germane to the case of the integration of Transylvania into Hungary in the XII and XIII centuries.

There has been much debate among scholars as to the origins of the factors that encourage the building of empire: where do they come from? Are they pull or push factors? The imperialism guiding Hungary’s expansion was a result of a mix of the metrocentric, pericentric, and systematic perspectives of empire. Push and pull factors were present in the metropole (Hungary), which lead to the integration of an already inhabited periphery (Transylvania). It is worth noting that the integration of Transylvania by the central Hungarian authorities took centuries, occurring in

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 25-26.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 27.



multiple stages. Some of these stages, such as foreign settlement and autonomy, are the main topics of this essay. As such, factors influencing the drive for empire organically changed as time advanced. For example, while the initial colonization phase was the result of factors such as poverty or the rise of feudalism in Western Europe and the Hungarian desire for expansion, maintenance of empire was facilitated later by the need to fill the coffers and the armies after a disastrous invasion of the Mongols in the middle of the XIII century.

### Colonialism as a Means of Expansion and Control in Pre-Colonial Times

Internal colonialism and colonization may be observed throughout history as means of gaining further control over a periphery. In *The Prince* (1532), Niccolò Machiavelli describes colonization as the ideal way of controlling acquired lands, given that the territory is inhabited by a group different from that in the metropole. I argue that the Hungarian kingdom relied on colonization to not only incorporate Transylvania, but also to stabilize, reform, and control it. Additionally, the Hungarian method contrasted with other colonial projects of the period, which hoped to transplant the population of the metropole to the periphery. Rather than transplant peoples from the metropole, it installed settlers from external, distant regions.

Whether an empire absorbs a periphery through colonization, or uses internal colonialism as a means of control, or both, colonialism proved effective in its goals of creating and maintaining empire in medieval times. The process by which Hungary attempted to incorporate Transylvania into the kingdom was shared by other kingdoms in the Middle Ages. Doyle describes such peripheries as colonies or “colonial peripheries:” polities that struggle to “maximize their independence and security, but they lack the power to resist effectively.”<sup>22</sup> This, then, leads to their absorption.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 27.

In terms of long-term control of the territory, writing in the early modern era, Machiavelli claims that to hold such a periphery requires either colonies or a large investment into martial resources in the region. Machiavelli argues that setting up colonies is not only a way to cause less injury to the native population, but also that they are also cheaper to maintain and more loyal than occupying forces. As such, colonies could be highly beneficial not only to the metropole, which is allowed to extend its authority, but also to the periphery, which is allowed to continue its existence (albeit a dependent one) without being forcefully occupied. Machiavelli also argues that for the conqueror to successfully incorporate, he needs to respect both the laws and taxes of the periphery he has conquered and settled. His advice is not simply a novel idea, but one that has been tested throughout time, as he evidences by drawing upon examples from Roman antiquity, I hope also to evidence this process through analysis of the Transylvanian periphery of Hungary.<sup>23</sup>

Colonial projects in medieval Europe often involved, as in the case of *The Prince*, the settling of conquered periphery by a population of the metropole and/or the collaboration of the locals. The colonial project of King James of Aragon in his newly conquered Kingdom of Valencia is an example of the use of internal colonization. As I will point out, James' strategy is remarkably similar to that taken up by the Hungarian central authorities towards the natives of the Transylvanian corner that was integrated through the colonial overtures of the Saxons.

Following a series of crusades against the Moorish taifa of Valencia, James conquered it at around the same time as the Hungarians were about to be hit by the first of the Mongol invasions (1241-1242). According to Robert Ignatius Burns, James wished to settle Christians in the newly acquired Islamic territories, in order to better integrate them into his kingdom. This meant "immersing Christian immigrants in a sea of Muslims, clustered in city atolls or more often

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<sup>23</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. W.K. Marriott, (Rockville: Arc Manor, 2007), 22-24.

scattered adrift.” The Mudejars, or Islamic Moors who remained in the territories, experienced life more or less as they had before the conquests of James, with their taxes relatively unchanged, and with the policy towards the Mudejars and Jews of Valencia being “neither tolerance nor discriminatory ghetto.”<sup>24</sup>

The principle purposes of empire in the case of medieval Aragon were financial. The royal coffers of the King of Aragon were constantly depleted and its survival depended solely on the mortgaging future tax income, with James himself writing in his memoirs that “all the rents in Aragon and Catalonia were held in pawn.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, the benefit of acquiring this periphery was that the king had more with which to fill his coffers, allowing him to leave behind the days of his youth “when I had nothing to eat, so ruined and mortgaged was the land!”<sup>26</sup> Even so, by the end of his reign, he lamented that only 30,000 Christians had settled in Valencia, which would mean the continuance of reliance on local collaboration from the Mudejar lords.<sup>27</sup>

Internal colonialism was present later on as well, in the British Isles. Markers of internal colonialism can be found in England in the XV and XVI centuries, in the form of attempts to extend authority into the hinterland regions, such as those near the Welsh border and near Scotland.<sup>28</sup> These thrusts into the periphery of a country are closely similar in fashion with the policy of the Hungarian regents centuries earlier. Marcher lords in the Welsh territories, the Scottish borderlands, and Ireland had lordships with privileged authority under sway. Due to the conflicts that the English monarchy faced in these centuries, both internal (War of the Roses) and external (wars with France), the king would remain dependent on support from the barons of the

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<sup>24</sup> Robert Ignatius Burns, *Medieval Colonialism: Postcrusade Exploitation of Islamic Valencia*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 8-10.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 18-19.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 31.

land: the situation had so weakened the once central English monarchy to where it could not function independently against the barons. In these two centuries, vast areas in the West and North of England found themselves not under royal authority, but under the authority of barons and privileged marcher lords, largely due to the “ecological differences” of the regions of England.<sup>29</sup>

The England of the XV and XVI centuries faced many of the same issues Hungary had faced in the aftermath of the Mongol Invasion of 1241: in both kingdoms, events devastated the rank and file of the baronial class, on whom both monarchs were dependent for their strength and wealth. In both historical moments, monarchs were in need of new sources of support.<sup>30</sup>

### Internal Colonialism as a State-Building Tool

It was in contrast to other medieval contemporary states that Hungary built up its state in Transylvania. Michael Hechter describes “national development” as “... a process which may be said to occur when the separate cultural identities of regions begin to lose social significance, and become blurred.”<sup>31</sup> Though this definition seems anachronistic in the use of the word “nation,” it is pertinent, in that the identities of the ethno-regional groups of eastern Transylvania were a vital part in the policies chosen by the government, particularly in relation to the Saxons, as when their identity and way of life was threatened in the 1270s, they rebelled rather than surrender rights and identity. While other kingdoms (Aragon and England) were attempting to further their national development, or at least semblances of it, in their colonization efforts, Hungary was essentially aiding in the creation of a new ethno-regional group, that of the Saxons, whom the authorities brought in to settle eastern Transylvania. According to Hechter, nation-building is, in its early stages, “better...thought of as empire-building.”<sup>32</sup> A state, therefore, that wishes to expand itself in

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 56-57.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 65.

an early, pre-industrial society will pursue empire-building by what means it has available, including colonization. Then what is the “state?” According to Max Weber, “a compulsory political organization with continuous operations will be called a “state” in so far as its administrative staff successfully upholds the claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order.”<sup>33</sup> It is in this context of imperialism through colonization that the medieval Hungarian kingdom was looking to carve out its authority.

The colonization incentives for Christians to move into Valencia and for Englishmen to settle the peripheries were meant to create a population more in touch with that of the metropole. The fact that Hungary not only did not settle its new peripheries with populations from the metropole, but used a completely foreign group in its endeavors, highlights the idea that not only was the aim to settle the Transylvanian periphery, but to do so with a population that was dependent on the king. The cultural identities of the new settlers were a welcomed source of local support in Transylvania for the Hungarian sovereign from the increasingly powerful, and often uncooperative, if not rebellious, Hungarian baronial class. This class, which constituted the highest echelons of Hungarian noble society, represented a constant source of hardship for the monarch, whose rule and heir’s ascension to the throne depended on the will of the baronial class, as the Hungarian monarchy was elective.<sup>34</sup> While they were a constant challenge, they were also his only means to control vast swaths of the kingdom, as the kings needed to cede more and more land to the barons in exchange for support in various conflicts, both internal and external. Succession was a time of particular hardship for royal authority, not only because of the short reign of the new king, but also due to payments in land that the new kings had to give in exchange for baronial

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>34</sup> Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 20.

support against factions and pretenders. Any means of expanding the empire without bringing the barons into the process, was a sure easing of pressure on the monarchs.

Hechter continues his discussion on the early stages of national development by arguing that, in the nascent stages, the metropole and periphery are in “virtual isolation” economically, culturally, and politically.<sup>35</sup> These divisions can also be noticed on smaller levels even among the newly integrated territories along the northern face of the southern Carpathian Mountains: the sedentary nature of the settlers compared with the pastoral nature of the forest- and mountain-inhabiting Vlachs.

Because of Hungary’s unique method of empire-building in and integration of Transylvania, this thesis serves as a helpful test for Hechter’s ideas on empire- and state-building in medieval Latin Europe. The Hungarian model, which also included the more often used stratagem of inviting holy orders to fight heathens, is distinct from other parts of Europe at this time in its use of a completely foreign, civilian element in the expansion of royal authority over a periphery. In a sense, through the amalgamation of the new Saxon communities in south-eastern Transylvania into a Saxon county, the Hungarian sovereigns established the Saxon ethno-regional group. Due to the creation of the Saxon urban settlements and governing structures, the Hungarian administration essentially used ethno-regional autonomy as a means of exerting greater control over the region. As such, the theories of internal colonialism and diffusion are paradoxically merged in the Hungarian example: the economic inequalities between metropole and periphery at the same time both increase and decrease; the peripheral culture is both acculturated to the metropole and, at the same time, asserted over it; and it is both politically integrated and separate. These drastic shifts are the result of multiple societies (royal, noble, ethno-regional groups) vying

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<sup>35</sup> Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 7.

for power and autonomy in the same region. In the Saxon county, on the other hand, the theory of internal colonialism is a much better fit, due in part to the persistence of ethnic identity, which diffusion theory states should dissipate as the assertion of the power of the metropole becomes stronger.

### Ethnicity

I do not, I wish to stress, intend to confuse the reader into thinking that modern conceptions of how we define “others” or “otherness” are the definitions that I wish to cement into this work. The groups were by no means homogenous, and the language defining them almost never comes from a group identifying itself, but from others identifying them to form a “them” in the medieval manuscripts. There is no “us,” there is only “them” in this part of Europe in this time period. In honesty, I am using the word “ethnicity,” with the hope that readers will understand that there is a lack of vocabulary for describing these proto-ethnic groups. The term “ethnicity” is meant to serve as a stand in for the medieval term “race,” which has a vastly differing connotation in modern English, as it was used to identify any group of “others” in the medieval period. I could use the term people-groups, but such a term would also be inaccurate and anachronistic. So, for the purpose of clarity, when I use the term ethnicity: I am using it as a substitution for the groups categorized in the medieval documents. As such, though they were certainly not a homogenous ethnic group and contained “ethnicities” from all over western Europe, I am referring to the colonists as “Saxons,”<sup>36</sup> as this is how they are referred to in contemporary medieval documents.

Medieval concepts of ethnicity use many of the same classifying variables as the primordial theory, but it, importantly, excludes some and the emphasis has a considerable shift. According to Robert Bartlett, there are four main variables in classifying ethnicity for the medieval mind:

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<sup>36</sup> They are also referred to as Teutons in church documents.

“...genere, moribus, lingua, [et] legibus”: “descent, customs, language, [and] law.”<sup>37</sup> As a result, in medieval Europe ethnicity was perceived as biological and hereditary. But, Bartlett rightly counters, in reality, three of four of the defining variables are cultural (customs, language, law).<sup>38</sup> However, according to Regio, customs, language, and law are the “primary badges of ethnicity.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, some biological and racial factors that we contemporarily use to “assign” ethnicity were, in medieval Europe, insignificant for classification. Instead, one sees a large dependence on language when describing the ethnicity of another. One may trace this practice even further, with the ancient Greek use of the term “barbarian” to reference non-Greeks and the Slavic words for the Germans: the German (Niemiec, немец, Немац) is “one who cannot speak.” Bartlett summarizes accordingly: “When we study race relations in medieval Europe we are analyzing the context between various linguistic and cultural groups, not between breeding stocks.”<sup>40</sup> The linguistic aspect seems to be the primary variable, however. For the medieval Christian mind, the nascent steps of ethnic differentiation was the fallout after the construction of the Tower of Babel. This notion is sustained by Isidore of Sevilla (560-636 AD): “Races arose from different languages, not languages from different races.”<sup>41</sup> “Gentem lingua facit”: “language makes race.”<sup>42</sup> It is in this way that I use the word “ethnicity” in this essay.

To understand the difference between this medieval definition of ethnicity (i.e., race) and what the modern ideas of ethnicity are, I have assembled an explanation.

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<sup>37</sup> Robert Bartlett, “Language and Ethnicity in Medieval Europe,” in *Ethnicity*, ed. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, 127-132, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 127.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.



The term “ethnicity” is often used, like empire, in many social sciences. But to what does it specifically refer? The term itself is a recent innovation, but its basis is an idea, that of the “other,” which as a concept has long existed.<sup>43</sup> Two definitions are offered by Hutchinson and Smith in the introduction of *Ethnicity*, one, by Schermerhorn, offers the definition of an ethnic group as

defined here as a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood. Examples of such symbolic elements are: kinship patterns, physical contiguity (as in location or sectionalism), religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliation, nationality, phenotypical features, or any combination of these. A necessary accompaniment is some consciousness of kind among members of the group.<sup>44</sup> (1978)

Hutchinson and Smith offer a simpler, more concise definition on their end

a named human population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members.<sup>45</sup>

Approaches to understanding ethnicity differ; however, as there are several theories which guide how ethnicity is perceived. They are known as the “primordial” and “instrumental” theories. Primordial theory, which evolved in the mid-XX century, argues that ethnicity is “primordial,” i.e. stems from non-malleable variables of the human experience, namely blood (ancestry), customs, language, race, region, and religion. In being defined by these variables, ethnicity becomes a calcified concept: it is naturalistic and is not changed by humans. In opposition to this theory stands the instrumental theory, which argues that ethnicity is a social construct, in that it is shaped by

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<sup>43</sup> John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, ed., *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

society, politics, and culture. In the instrumentalist view, ethnicity is a tool for interest- and status-groups. It is important to note, as Hutchinson and Smith do, that few adhere to one group over the other. Strangely, however, few also attempt to merge the two ideas together.<sup>46</sup>

These theorems are, however, modern ideas on ethnicity. They do not necessarily reflect the past, and one who wishes to study ethnicity in, say, the Middle Ages, is cautioned to leave these ideas at the door. I have laid them out simply so that the reader may identify them and use them comparatively with the medieval notions of ethnicity, as there are similarities.

#### A Word on Sources and Translation:

Many sources, both primary and secondary sources, which I have consulted for the purpose of researching this paper are written in German or Romanian or translated into those languages. I have provided quotations for the ease of access and for the sake of reference. Appendix A contains documents I find to be vital for the reader, and as such, have translated them fully into English. I have translated to the best of my ability and believe that my translations are fair to the original sources. I have used my own edits to the work sparingly for the sake of understanding the text as it is meant to be understood in the original languages, so alterations were used only in cases where translation fails to accurately portray the intended message or mood. Please note, that most, if not all, of the primary sources that I have used are originally in Latin and been hence translated into German and Romanian. As I am translating from German and Romanian into English, I am at the mercy of those who have translated from the original Latin. As this is the case, I myself have been careful to corroborate, if at all possible, one translation with another, i.e. the German with the

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

Romanian. I have also checked the Latin originals, if available through the Romanian National Archive's website on digitized medieval documents.<sup>47</sup>

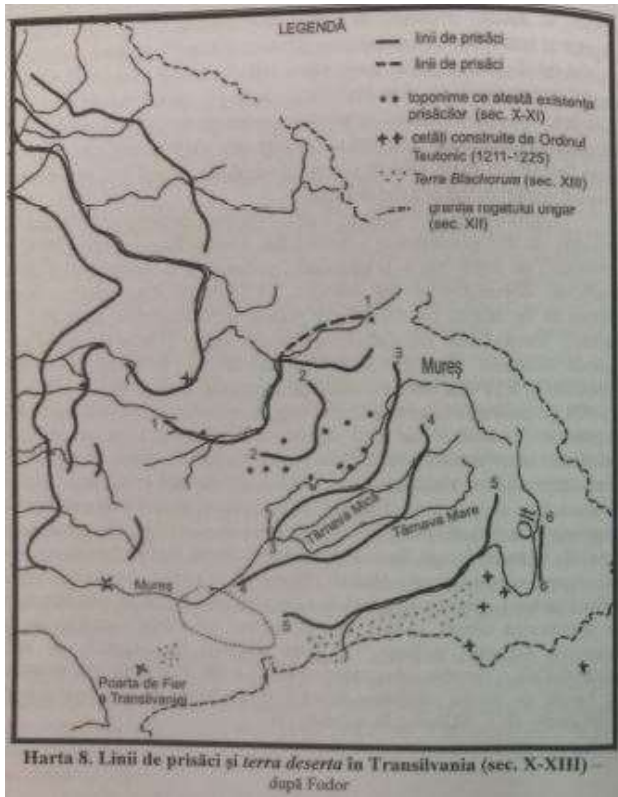
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<sup>47</sup> [Link for Archive's digitized medieval documents' search engine.](#)

The language may be changed in the top right corner, where there is a Romanian flag. English is engleză.

## Chapter I: Privileged Beginnings

The Hungarian colonization scheme utilized the Saxons as a tool, by which to expand effective control eastward. Such a policy was a part of a series of what I argue are ethnically-motivated policies and decisions of the central Hungarian authorities. I argue that the Saxons were settled specifically to integrate the eastern Transylvanian lands into the domains of the royal house, in an effort to avoid baronial supremacy in this vital part of Hungary. Through the granting of royal charters, exclusive privileges, and imposition of an ethnically-composed administrative county, the Hungarian royal authorities hoped to integrate eastern Transylvania (i.e., bringing it into the state apparatus), step-by-step, into the royal domains, and place its indigenous populations at the service of the king himself. This extension of effective Hungarian governance to the crests of the Carpathian Mountains also maintains the geopolitical significance of Transylvania and Hungarian ambitions to the east, as the integration of these lands would create opportunities for Hungarian kings to continue expansion even further to the east.



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Map 3: This map shows the approximate lines of administrative control of Hungary in Transylvania and their temporal order. The filled lines show the lines of control advancing, before finally reaching the Olt line (lines 5 and 6).

### Settlements of Foreigners

Key to this essay is the fact that the settlers themselves were foreigners, invited by the kings (and occasionally dukes and voivodes, when they wanted to build their own loyal centers), to settle Transylvania. The questions of why the kings chose the route of internal colonialism as a means of expansion of empire, why they utilized foreign agents to do so, and why they did not use the native population of the metropole in their colonial projects are vital to understanding the significance of how the policies of the kings amount to being ethnically-motivated. The Saxons were not only used to establish a colonial anchor for royal authority in Transylvania, but they also brought a multitude of other benefits to their new masters.

<sup>48</sup> Ioan Marian Țiplic, *Fortificațiile medievale timpurii din Transilvania: secolele al X-lea – al XII-lea*, (Iași: Institutul European, 2007), 106.

So, why not just conquer the region by force? There was nothing to facilitate any stately administrative activities such as collections of taxes or manpower from the locals for the royal levies, though the benefits of such activities would have been immense. In this region, there were no known administrative centers, no castles, no urban centers in the period immediately preceding the Saxon colonization. Essentially, there was nothing to conquer in terms of centers of politics in this region in the XII century. These issues are vital to understanding why the Hungarians needed to go through the trouble of erecting administrative facilities from scratch. From the land grants to the Saxons we know that the Szeklers were already present in this area of southern Carpathia. The issue with the Szekler presence was that it was more of an occupation, rather than actual administrative rule. We know very little about the Vlach populations' organization before the Saxon settlement, but we do know that they were there and that they lived among the Szeklers. In this case, I argue that the Szekler "occupation" of the area could not constitute nor expand Hungarian rule, because they themselves were, at the time, an arm of the state military apparatus, not of the administrative. It appears that the Hungarian kings agreed: they transplanted the Szeklers to new pastures (to the limits of eastern Transylvania, the area around the Carpathian crest) while bringing in the Saxons, launching a "phase two" of the integration of southern Carpathian Transylvania.

The Hungarians had previous experience with utilizing outside groups to facilitate their state expansion/control and the settlement of groups (in particular, Germans). The center of Szatmar-Nemethi, in this case, likely served as an early trial run to future policies and approaches to colonization in the south. Szatmar-Nemethi was founded during the reign of Duke Géza in the X century, whose son, Stephen [later King St. Stephen, founder of the Kingdom of Hungary], was married to Gisele, daughter of Duke Heinrich of Bavaria. According to Deutsch, many German

nobles accompanied Gisele to Hungary, where they founded Szatmar-Nemethi, the first German settlement in Hungary.<sup>49</sup> It follows that the settlement of peoples in their own enclaves, if the uncited narrative of Teutsch is to be believed, was not a new concept to Hungarian rulers. This also explains why the Saxons were settled, as the Hungarians had experience with dealing with them and the Germans had a history in their courts. It is worth further mention that the settlement of foreigners in order to build towns and settlements was also not a practice used exclusively in this region of Hungary, but also in other areas, such as in the Eger Valley, many of whose settlements were founded using settled German and Walloon groups.<sup>50</sup> The answers, therefore, to this secondary question are that 1) they have experience with Germans in their administrative organs, meaning that they need not worry about culture clash and 2) they could utilize the Saxons in more ways than one: administrative and as an important military force providing troops tied directly into the royal levies.

In terms of why the Hungarians did not pursue a policy of organic settlement of the east with Hungarians, it should be noted that German migration to the east had been occurring by this point for quite some time, albeit under differing circumstances. The crusades against the Slavic tribes in the territory between the Elbe and Oder rivers already displayed a German desire to relocate from densely inhabited west-central Europe. In this case, I agree with Transylvanian Saxon historian Thomas Nögler that the emergence of feudal society, coupled with overpopulation of Lotharingia was a vital push factor for many of the German migrants.<sup>51</sup> These economic reasons, including the pull factor of grants of land from the Hungarian administration, would seem to make

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<sup>49</sup> Teutsch, *Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, 6.

<sup>50</sup> A. Kubinyi, "Urbanization in the East-Central Part of Medieval Hungary," in *Towns in Medieval Hungary*, ed. László Gerevich, (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1990), 108.

<sup>51</sup> Nögler, *Așezarea sașilor în Transilvania*, 27-28, 30.

sense. Such opportunities would be enticing to potential settlers of all socio-economic backgrounds, except perhaps the highest echelons of the new feudal society of Lotharingia.

Nägler, however, fails to properly address many other possible factors of why the Hungarians settled Saxons and not Hungarians. Military factors, along with administrative ones, also play part in the equation. As noted in the *Diploma Andreanum*, the Saxons were to provide a military contingent in case of not only defensive action, but also offensive actions and actions on behalf of the king in service to foreign lords: “They will provide five hundred soldiers in royal expeditions within the of the borders of the kingdom and one hundred for outside the borders if the king goes in person, and if he sends a servant outside of the kingdom instead, or to the assistance of one of his friends, or on his own business, they will need to provide only fifty soldiers.”<sup>52</sup>

In addition, a possible factor could be the hope of Hungarian kings to administer the area through a hierarchical, organized system: feudalism.<sup>53</sup> On this point, however, Nägler seems to contradict himself. While he argues that the Saxons had a feudalizing element to their colonization, he relies on the theory that the Saxons left Lotharingia due to the development of feudalism there.<sup>54</sup> The situation here is murky to be certain, and one may argue that feudalization of south-eastern Carpathia was only a small factor—if it was one at all—in the Hungarian original decision to utilize the Saxons as a colonizing tool.

Likely, an outside group would simply have been the path of least resistance, in the long run, for extending the empire and royal reach over Transylvania. The settlers were not forced to

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<sup>52</sup> Andrew II, *Andrei al II-lea regele Ungariei întârește coloniștilor teutoni, așezați pe teritoriul dela Orăștie până la Baraolt, inclusiv teritoriul Secuilor din Sebus și ținutul Daraus, mai multe privilegii*, vol. 1 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XI, XII și XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1951), 209.

<sup>53</sup> Așezarea sașilor în Transilvania și aportul lor la dezvoltarea societății feudale românești: The Settlement of the Saxons in Transylvania and their Contribution to the Development of Romanian Feudal Society

<sup>54</sup> Nägler, *Așezarea sașilor în Transilvania*, 26-30.



come to Transylvania and did so of their own accord, although push factors were certainly present. These factors indicate that migration was already occurring in the years before the Saxon migration started to Transylvania, particularly due to the effects of the imposition of feudalism, lack of privileges in some towns, and flooding in lower Lotharingia. These contributing causes to forced migration mean that the Hungarians had a population that they could immediately settle in area without having to build up an administrative system from scratch from the local nobles or Vlach knyaz'.

Furthermore, simply relocating Hungarians would not have caused a net increase in the total number of troops available or in economic activity, due to the fact that in order to settle Hungarians, the kings would have had to surrender their own serfs from their properties and demenses, or would have required a "donation" from the barons. It is clear that the barons would do nothing that increased the power of the king, nor would the king have allowed the last regions of Transylvania fall to powers which would potentially advocate for independence from royal authority. An outside entity, indebted to royal authority (particularly in regard to martial matters), is what the rulers of Hungary desired.

Much like the situation with the barons, the of local nobility and Vlach knyaz' would have felt little loyalty to the crown, as they were native to the land. As autonomous natives, the royal grants would have meant nothing to them if there was no administrative means by which to enforce them. The other option, settling Hungarians, would have necessitated the rulers to find a source of Hungarian peasants, already described as no easy feat. It is very possible that the Saxons were simply available and willing (or desperate), and so the Hungarians simply facilitated a general migration eastward, one which was already occurring.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, it is important to note that

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

the Saxons came from a region, which was among the most urban in continental Europe at the time. The towns of Flanders and Frankonia has an urban population likely equal to that of Northern Italy and Sicily, at the time. While this area lacked the immense cities of Northern Italy, the towns of these regions were more numerous.<sup>56</sup> The Hungarians, given the geopolitical and potential economic importance of eastern Transylvania, could have seen a development similar to that in Lotharingia in Transylvania extremely enticing. Such a development would have been even more beneficial when one considers the potential effects of such development on royal authority in this frontier region.

### Beginnings and Early Privilege

The early waves of Saxon settlers arrived in the middle of the XII century. Primarily rural in their beginning stages, their settlements often represented simple plots of land. The early settlers settled in the area which would later form the County of the Saxons (see Map 1, that surrounding Szeben, or Cibinium). Over the years, they would become, thanks to their privileged status, increasingly urban, and their settlements evolved into medieval towns, quickly catching up to longer-established towns in the Hungarian towns of what is today western Transylvania. By the time of the Mongol invasion in 1241, the Saxon County would be heavily built, boasting several royally-chartered towns and market-towns.<sup>57</sup>

The beginnings of the Saxon colonization show characteristics of nascent forms of ethnic classification. The medieval Hungarian approach to dealing with this Saxon “ethnicity,” however, shows a side of salutary benevolence towards the newcomers, not of nationalistic aggression. The central authorities, since the very beginning of the arrival of the Saxons, provided every

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<sup>56</sup> David Ditchburn, “The Larger Towns of Europe,” in *Atlas of Medieval Europe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. David Ditchburn, Simon Maclean, and Angus Mackay, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 156.

<sup>57</sup> Paul Niedermaier, *Geneza orașelor medievale în Transilvania*, (București: Editura Academiei Române, 2016), 132.

opportunity for the success of the Saxon settlements, allowing freedoms and grants to ensure their growth. In reality, the Hungarians wanted to use their new holdings as stepping stones to grow their empire to the slopes of the Carpathian Mountains.

Historically, the primary sources from the Hungarian kingdom begin mentions of Transylvania in the XI century, beginning with Géza I's grant to the monastery of St. Benedict, in what is today Slovakia, of one half of the royal salt customs from the Torda mines. This donation also includes the tithe in kind from the village of Artand, consisting of twelve five-year old pigs and twelve measures of honey annually, as well as land grants to three servant households to watch the monastery's swine.<sup>58</sup> Throughout the following century, documents to do with Transylvania are sparse; however, many royal documents are confirmed by, among others, the bishop of Transylvania and Transylvanian rulers or nobles. Not until 1177 does one find a more concrete definition of the actual administrative control of Transylvania of the royal authorities. In a document dated 1177, Béla III's confirms of the will of Caba, who left his belongings to the monastery of St. Martin in Pannonhalma—in present-day Hungary. The document is underwritten by the counts Gall of Albensis, Toma of Cluj, and Pancras of Timis.<sup>59</sup> Using this information, we can assume that by around 1177, the Hungarian royal administration, at least in terms of appointing nobility, has reached, by my most conservative estimates the Cluj-Torda-Albensis-Timis line.

The secondary sources paint a similar portrait of line of control. Kurt Horedt seconds the findings of the archaeological research mentioned in Vătășianu's work by explaining the various

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<sup>58</sup> Géza I, *Geza I regele Ungariei dăruiește m-rii st. Benedict (azi în R. Cehoslovacă) vama de sare dela Turda și mai multe sate în Bihor și pe Criș, arătând obligațiile acestora față de mănăstire*, vol. 1 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XI, XII și XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1951), 1-2.

<sup>59</sup> Béla III. *Bela al III-lea regele Ungariei întărește testamentul lui Caba, printre confirmatorii fiind și dregători din Transilvania*, vol. 1 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XI, XII și XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1951), 6.

stages of Hungarian control over Transylvania, with Thomas Năgler commenting that "Kurt Horedt does not understand these geographical limits as fixed borders, likewise, the chronology should not be interpreted as absolute dates," meaning that there is no specific date, to which we can attribute the concrete expansion of Hungarian central power.<sup>60</sup> Năgler mentions Horedt's explanation of the line of expansion around 1100 to correspond to the valley of the Târnava Mare river, which happens to correspond with the Cluj-Torda-Albensis line.

In terms of physical evidence, we know of the Saxons' arrival to Southern Transylvania through archeological research in the area. According to Romanian medievalist and art historian Virgil Vătășianu, these early Saxon settlements spread from the area around present-day Oraștie to the Cibin Valley and eastward up to the Perșani Mountains in the XII century.<sup>61</sup> Vătășianu reiterates the importance of the nascent Saxon communities to the expansion of the Hungarian royal authority, stating that "the incorporation of Transylvania into the Magyar state was not achieved in a single military operation of great magnitude, but in successive phases." He adds that the line of Hungarian control only reached the Olt line in the second half of the XII century, precisely the same period when Saxon settlements began dotting this landscape and moving the frontiers of the Hungarian kingdom eastward.<sup>62</sup>

The earliest evidence in written sources of the settlement of Western colonists in the area of present-day Sibiu (Hermannsdorf, later Hermannstadt), Romania begins to appear in sources as early as 1191. Pope Clandestine III's investiture of a Saxon free provostship<sup>63</sup> in Hermannsdorf—then referred to as Cibinium or Villa Hermanni—mentions the "ecclesia Theutonicorum

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<sup>60</sup> Thomas Năgler, *Așezarea sașilor în Transilvania*, 17.

<sup>61</sup> Virgil Vătășianu. *Istoria artei feudale în Țările Române*. Vol. I. (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române. 1959), 7.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> In German Catholicism, a provost represents the senior official of certain chapters of the Church.

Ultrasiluanium,” the assembly (church) of the Transylvanian Germans.<sup>64</sup> Other mentions, soon after Clandestine’s sanction of the provostship, appear in the next document recorded in the first volume of the *Urkundenbuch*, in which the papal legate, Gregory, settles the argument over the extent of the Saxon Provostship, in which he mentions both “omnes Flandrenses” and “praepositum Cipiniensem.”<sup>65</sup> While official documents recording the existence of a Saxon locality in South-eastern Transylvania appear in the 1190s, it is clear that the settlement did not spring to life suddenly, out of thin air. Archeological findings show that properties existed in the area beginning in the early to middle of the XII century.<sup>66</sup> The settlement grew until it was large enough to be determined to be of enough importance that the pope saw such a provostship as sustainable and beneficial.<sup>67</sup>

### A System of Service and Privilege

To understand how the Saxons came to settle where they did, it is important to analyze first the Hungarian hierarchical system, with its assumption that all Hungarian land belonged to the king until it was granted by him, and the systems of grant and privileges that kept the kingdom operating. The relationship between the Saxons and the king, therefore, was vital if the Saxons were to have success themselves and also to successfully establish themselves as an administrative

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<sup>64</sup> Clandestine III, *Papst Coelestin III. bestätigt dem Graner Erzbischof des Krönungsrecht und das geistliche Jurisdiktionsrecht gegenüber den Hofbeamten und bestätigt die Errichtung einer freien Propstei unter den Siebenbürger Deutschen*, vol. 1 of *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, ed. Franz Zimmermann and Carl Werner (Hermannstadt: Herausgegeben von Ausschuss des Vereines für siebenbürgische Landeskunde, 1892), 1-2.

<sup>65</sup> Cardinal Gregory, *Kardinallegat Gregor entscheidet den Streit zwischen dem siebenbürgischen Bischof und dem Hermannstädter Propst betreffend den Umfang des Propsteisprengels*, vol. 1 of *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, ed. Franz Zimmermann and Carl Werner (Hermannstadt: Herausgegeben von Ausschuss des Vereines für siebenbürgische Landeskunde, 1892), 2-3.

<sup>66</sup> Niedermaier, 132.

<sup>67</sup> See Map 1, area around Szeben is tied directly to the Archbishopric of Esztergom, not the Bishopric of Transylvania.

force loyal to the crown. If the Hungarian crown wanted to expand, the Saxons would be needed as an administrative tool, serving to circumvent the local blocks of baronial power.

That the land that the Saxons colonized could only have come from direct sanction of the king himself, or that of the titular noble, to whom the land belonged. Let us begin then, in analyzing the hierarchical system and the system of land distribution to the lesser nobles. In Hungary, the system in place up to the middle of the XIII century was based on servitude to the Crown and reciprocal grants of land and privileges in the cases of the “little nobility.”<sup>68</sup> Nobles were compelled to take up service and establish reciprocal relationships with those of a higher order, repeating in this fashion all the way up to the king.<sup>69</sup> According to Martyn Rady’s research, more than two-thirds of the kingdom’s land was considered that of the monarch, as all territory not in use for cultivation or grazing was considered his own.<sup>70</sup> The balance was a careful and precarious one to maintain. While Rady speaks at length about the Hungarian system of service and privilege in the strictly Hungarian sense, i.e. in regard to the Hungarian nobility, this relationship is one that can clearly be brought to explain the situation of the Saxons in the Altland as well, as we clearly see from the example of John the Latin.

In addition to being granted the land that they settled, the Saxons enjoyed numerous autonomic privileges. Ecclesiastically, the Saxon privileges were granted by the pope himself through the grant of a free provostship, and in doing so, ensured that the Saxons would not fall under the religious ownership of the local authorities. A free provost in Cibinium meant that the county was not under the direct ecclesiastical rule of the Bishopric of Transylvania. The

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<sup>68</sup> I.e. not the baronial class, two classes of nobility were distinguished by the Golden Bull of Andrew II. The barons did not depend on royal support and could act, more or less, as they wished, with little the king could do about it. The lesser nobility depended on royal non-titular grants, often came from older, more distinguished families and often traced their ancestry to early Hungarian warriors. They could occupy the roles of bailiffs, castle serfs (castellans, later royal serfs), and other small, local roles.

<sup>69</sup> Martyn Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*, (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 2-3.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 16.

provostship was, rather, granted to the domains of the archbishop of Strigonium [Esztergom/Gran]. Harald Roth, in his work *Hermannstadt*, offers a theory on why Cibinium was declared a free provostship to be held by the Saxons. He argues that, by allowing a free provostship in Cibinium—particularly with its Saxon ethnic composition—the provostship would come to set the foundation of a new—Saxon—bishopric in Southeastern Transylvania. By placing the provostship under the archbishop of Strigonium, Pope Clandestine III, according to Roth, was granting the provostship the protection of the Hungarian crown.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, the grant of the provostship can be seen as a form of political protection on behalf of the Saxon communities situated within the lands of the Provostship of Cibinium. Such an action would ensure not only that 1) the king would have more direct access to the area, without having to go through the Bishopric of Transylvania first, but 2) also ensure that the land colonized and the peoples brought into the empire would fall under the rule of the king himself and not under the local rule of the bishop of Transylvania, which might prevent the full realization of the formation of a future bishopric. It is evident as such that there was a certain degree of importance assigned to the newly colonized areas.

Roth's theory can be supported by the continued heavy immigration to the area, which was encouraged by the Hungarian crown.<sup>72</sup> This immigration, dependent on land grants, was therefore solely under the sanction of the king. The privilege of a free provostship should not be underestimated. It allowed the Saxons, theoretically speaking, free rein in the establishment of their communities, particularly ones that would become ecclesiastical seats, in turn becoming

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<sup>71</sup> Harald Roth, *Hermannstadt: Kleine Geschichte einer Stadt in Siebenbürgen*, (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2006), 5.

<sup>72</sup> Judging by the rapid growth of Saxon towns, see Niedermaier, immigration was relatively well sustained throughout the period (mid-XII to mid-XIII century). That the towns quickly caught up to the centers of Albensis, Oradea, Timis, and other older, Hungarian towns, indicates a heavy influx of foreigners into the region. Particularly telling is the number of soldiers that the Saxons are expected to provide in the *Diploma Andreanum* (500 in 1224) indicates a relatively large population within a few decades of settlement.

administrative centers capable of ruling the surrounding area. For the Saxons, this free rein meant local self-administration using their own methods, laws, and agents.

Perhaps the most window-like document that we have from this time to illuminate the Saxons' situation in this system of service and privileged in the first half of the XIII century is the *Diploma Andreanum*, which, apart from establishing clearly the borders of the Saxon county, grants several key privileges and mentions the ethnic situation of the region.<sup>73</sup> This document contextualizes the existence of Vlachs and Pechenegs in the area, and, in a fashion similar to that in the forged document of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, establishes that these locals had their own rights on this land.

The chief function of the Saxons', in this early stage of their Transylvanian settlement, was martial. The *Diploma Andreanum* is a treasure-trove of insight into the many rights of the Saxons and of their progress in less than one hundred years from their arrival. It is important to note that "We... have renewed their rights from earlier;" therefore, not only were new rights granted, but old privileges also renewed, further supporting their status as an originally privileged populace.<sup>74</sup> Thus, the Saxons were clearly significant enough, or brought enough benefit, or both, to warrant not only renewed rights but extended grants of land and tariff exemptions. The tariff exemptions are especially telling: the Saxons, at this time, were not an economic force for the royal administration. Yet clearly the Saxons were important in the eyes of the monarchs, otherwise these extensive rights and privileges would be unnecessary. The mention of the required military levies to be provided by the Saxons is also necessary information for this argument. As Rady argues in his work, the Hungarian king wanted warriors trained in the Western style of combat: heavy

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<sup>73</sup> See Appendix A for full translation. Translation from Romanian. Original: Andrew II, *Andrei al II-lea regele Ungariei întărește coloniștilor teutoni...*, 208-210.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.



knights.<sup>75</sup> This ingredient, he argues, was necessary for Hungarian martial competitiveness: it was the lacking component in the Hungarian military. The need for Western-style cavalry reflects also Hungary's self-image of belonging to the West, an idea that surely came about thanks to Catholic links to that half of Europe and from the Hungarian central administration's early formative years, in which it borrowed heavily from the Carolingian tradition. We, of course, cannot ascertain through this document alone what quality of levies were expected, nor have I been able to find, in any document, specific mentions to knights provided through the Saxon levies.

What the *Diploma Andreanum* reveals is the leeway that was granted, perhaps most importantly, to the Saxons. These grants show, concretely, the importance of the distinction between ethno-regional groups in the establishment of royal authority in Transylvania. If, as we are arguing, the Hungarians settled the Saxons in the Altland not to populate an uninhabited region, but to administer pre-populated areas, the Saxons would need a developed center to provide administration to the region and to serve to extend the cordon of royal authority over the area. This was, undoubtedly, the most important step that the Hungarians took in regard to building up the administrative capacity of the region. By granting the Saxons of the County of Cibinium free rein in selecting not just its priests (tied to the free Provostship of Cibinium), but also its own *judex* and administrators, the Hungarians effectively guaranteed the development of a Middle Francian administrative system, thanks to the ideas and administration means that the Saxons brought with them. It is key that this development took place, as it facilitated the expansion of Hungary to dominance over the southern Carpathian range. This seemingly self-directed local ruling is in stark contrast to the Hungary described in Rady's research, which focused on Hungary proper and western Transylvania, lands already long under royal and magnate control. In these parts of

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<sup>75</sup> Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service*, 29.

Hungary, local conditional nobles ruled, selected not by the inhabitants but from above, their rule being part of the reciprocal system of service and privilege. This world of self-directed (except, of course, the royally appointed count, as per the *Diploma Andreanum*) local rule sticks out like a sore thumb. It seems odd indeed compared to noble rule and rule by the kindred.<sup>76</sup> This contrast shows just how privileged the Saxons of the County of Cibinium were in their rights, and thus shows their perceived importance in the eyes of the rulers of Hungary.

Further evidence of reliance on royal grants for settlement in this region of eastern Transylvania only further indicates that the rulers of Hungary were actively involved in maintaining their supremacy in the region. Evidence for this claim is in the donation of land to the Kerch monastery<sup>77</sup> and also in many other primary sources, in which the king decrees that land be granted. There also exist situations that insinuate that the previous inhabitants or owners were stripped of their land, such as in the case of John the Latin, who received land, which used to belong to “Our faithless bailiff Andrew.”<sup>78</sup> This, likewise, indicates a higher level of royal involvement and care in the region, from central Hungary. That the king is able to evict, let alone cared to do so, further illustrates active royal involvement.

These grants and development of the Altland were successful not just because of these rights, but also because they were not abused by their beneficiaries. The boundaries set between the Saxons and royal rights to extend royal will were not to be crossed, despite the benevolent language of the *Diploma Andreanum*. Just one year after the issue of this golden bull, in 1225 King

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<sup>76</sup> The kindred are the clans of the barons and high nobility, which owned enormous swatches of land all over the Hungarian Kingdom. The complexities of the kindreds and their interactions’ consequences on Hungary are immense, and I cannot begin to cover them in this text. For more, see Rady’s chapter on the XI and XII centuries in *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*.

<sup>77</sup> See page 44 for quotation.

<sup>78</sup> Andrew II, *König Andreas II. verleiht Johann Latinus das Gebiet der Kozdquelle*, in *Quellen zur Geschichte der siebenbürger Sachsen, 1191-1975*, ed. Ernst Wagner (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1976), 10.

“...Unserem ungetreuen Pristalden Andreas... erbrechtlich gehörte...”

Andrew II forcefully evicted, the Saxon's brethren, the Teutonic Knights, from their granted domains, despite all of his previous goodwill to the Order. The Order had, despite lack of royal endorsement, begun building additional stone fortresses and was seemingly attempting to splinter off to form a crusader state tied to Rome, not Hungary.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, while the king was willing to sanction grants, they were very much contractually maintained. Should the beneficiary renege on their obligations, the king had no issues with forcefully restoring his authority over them, or in spite of them. The Saxons of Cibinium, therefore, had to balance a precarious policy of their own ambitions to create a life for themselves and develop their lands and to stay within the bounds of the royal agreements.

#### A Game of Empire: The Saxons after Settlement

With the Saxon colonial project, the kings of Hungary were essentially engaging in a game of empire, one waged against opponents, who were both internal, the barons, and external, in terms of expansion of the empire. In executing their scheme of internal colonialism, the kings effectively exerted control over a previously un-administrable periphery, opened up offensive venues to carry out eastern ambitions, and created a Transylvanian political entity dependent on royal support, thus ensuring that Transylvania was securely sutured to the empire.

The Catholic crown wanted to continue Hungarian expansion eastward. Inspired by recent crusades and ambitions of rule across the Carpathian Mountains, Hungary looked to set up a base from which to launch operations into lands at the time ruled over by the Turkic Cumans. Such eastward expansion also had further religious implications, as Vlachs and Bulgarians in the region were adherents to the Orthodox rite, while the Cumans themselves were pagans. The aggressive

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<sup>79</sup> Honorius III, *Papa Honoriu al III-lea sfătuiește pe Andrei al II-lea regele Ungariei să restituie Cavalerilor Teutoni țara Bârsei*, vol. 1 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XI, XII și XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1951), 223-225.

attitude of the Hungarian kingdom in regard to the territories east of their borders is corroborated in Alberic of Trois-Fontaines' *Chronica*, in which he attests to a 1239 attack on the Mongols by a "count of Transylvania," ultimately resulting in the count's death at a battle "near the Meotid marshes," by the Sea of Azov.<sup>80</sup>

Such an episode is vital in establishing the reasoning for the Hungarian expansion and the seeming desire to reach the Carpathian crests. With control of the mountain passes, the Hungarians essentially would control access between east and west, vital for not only defensive purposes, but also create opportunities for offensive operations. With the Transylvanian lowlands, and with key centers such as Albensis, Torda, and Cluj safe, the Hungarians could mount a more concrete defense by defending the mountain passes from nearby centers of administrative power, rather than from distant centers in the Transylvanian lowlands. The defense alone was key, but offensive capabilities opened up by the control of the mountain passes were also an important factor in the desire to control the Carpathian range. The expansion to and the defense of the mountain passes were to be the roles of the Saxons at the beginning stages of their colonization and habitation of the region, evidenced by the notion established in the *Diploma Andreanum*, which stipulates a martial factor in the Hungarian monarchs' settlement of the Saxons.

With the idea that the Saxons were purposely brought in to expand the Hungarian authority, one must first identify the furthest eastern outpost of such authority. Primary sources seem to point to Albensis as being the furthest large Hungarian administrative center in the east in the early XII century, with the count of Albensis undersigning various documents, including one from as early

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<sup>80</sup> Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, *Chronica*, vol. 23 of *Monumenta Germanicae Historica: inde ab anno Christi quingentesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz (Leipzig: K. W. Hiersemann, 1925), 946.

"Contra Tataros vero misit comitem Ultrasilvanium, qui in quodam augusto transitu paludum Meotidarum ita confregit primum cornu illorum quod ceteris retro respicientibus, iam in illis partibus perisse putabur memoria eorum sonitu."

as 1111. Other administrative centers/counties in the east at the time were Arad, Bihor, Cenad, Oradea, and Timis. Albensis continues to reappear as an important center, due to its status as the seat of the Bishopric of Transylvania, which, as stated, fought tooth and nail against the free status of the Saxon Provostship. Thus, further eastward expansion would necessitate the creation of new centers. As such, the Saxons became crucial in the expansion of Hungarian authority through the creation of the centers in south-eastern Transylvania, which would spark the beginnings of even further expansion eastward.

Further documents, which become more easily available after the dawn of the XIII century, attest to not only grants (of land and autonomy) to Saxons, but also specifically mention Saxons who have already settled. In 1206, for example, King Andrew II bequeathed to John the Latin, who himself was Walloon, “the land named Cwezfeý” [near present-day Cisnădie], which was seemingly taken from one “Andrew, son of the German Martin of the village of Vratotus.”<sup>81</sup> Hence, by this date, this document indicates that several Saxon settlements had been established in the area for at least two generations and that the nobility has entered the service of the king to be granted land. It should be added that John the Latin is addressed in the document with a knightly title, thereby proving service rendered in the name of the king, indicating that at least some Saxons were serving in military roles as early as the very beginning of the XIII century.

That the authorities granted Saxons land in this specific area of Transylvania is telling, as it shows a desire to close the gap between the administrative borders of the Hungarian kingdom and the Carpathian Mountains in the south-east, which—apart from serving as a natural defensive barrier—were the home of Vlach pastoralists. There is debate, particularly among Hungarian and Romanian historians about the extent to which these Vlachs “lands” had already had complex

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<sup>81</sup> Andrew II, *König Andreas II. verleiht Johann Latinus das Gebiet der Kozdquelle*, 10-13.

systems of administration. The use in primary sources of the Latin word *terra* to describe them only confounds the matter, with many Hungarian historians claiming the word simply means land, while Romanian historians argue that it is being used to represent “a land,” in the more complex sense of a political entity. While there is debate about the development or lack thereof, and of the number and range of these Vlach lands, the existence of Vlach populations on the Transylvanian periphery in the XII and early XIII centuries, particularly in south-east Transylvania is accepted even by Hungarian historians.<sup>82</sup> The complexity of any Vlach administrative structures, while important in other historiographical and nationalist contexts, does not inhibit the notion of integration of the Vlachs by the Hungarian authorities into the Hungarian kingdom. That the Hungarians integrated the Vlachs into the state apparatus of Hungary soon after the arrival of the Saxons is clear: Vlachs are among those groups called upon by Count Joachim of Cibinium in 1210 to raise forces. A document specifically mentions that: “...having named Count Joachim [of Cibinium] as the head of the army, he [King Andrew II] sent him [Count Joachim] in his [Tsar Boril’s] aid, and he [Count] Joachim gathered his Saxons, Vlachs, Szeklers and Pechenegs.”<sup>83</sup> He did not call for aid from a separate entity, but rather exercised his power in his land.

Regarding the land that the Saxons settled, it is important to note that it was by no means fresh land for the Hungarian kingdom. Toponyms, and the fact that the Szeklers themselves were in the area already, imply a Hungarian influence over the territory. The goal, however, of the Saxon settlement was to supersede influence with domination. If the Hungarian administration wished to do more than simply exert influence, administrative centers with a loyal, local population were

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<sup>82</sup> Martyn Rady, “Voivode and *Regnum*: Transylvania’s Place in the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary,” in *Historians and the History of Transylvania*, ed. László Péter (Boulder: Eastern European Monographs, 1992), 89-92.

<sup>83</sup> Béla IV, *Bela al IV-lea regele Ungariei întărește lui Filip episcop de Zagreb și lui Toma comite de Crocou, fiii lui Ioachim comite de Sibiu, moșia Szlaneye*, vol. 1 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XI, XII și XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1951), 338-341.

needed. Such operations could not simply be done from distant Albensis. It is no secret that the Hungarian monarchs, and sometimes even the local barons, lavished the Saxon people with rights, privileges, and land donations. The privileges, particularly those of a financial nature (tax exemptions, tariff exemptions), seem to specifically desire an outcome of urbanization. Reduction or elimination of tariffs specifically point to an attempt to increase trade through the region, with towns developing as a means accommodating the increased traffic.

The Szeklers were a type of border guard for the area, living in the region with the Vlachs. It was the Saxons who brought the Vlachs under true administrative sway of the Hungarian central authorities. The Szeklers were not, nor should be perceived as an administrative vehicle, as they received autonomy in the region from the monarchs in exchange for service as border guards before the Saxon settlement, as such, this groups played military role in the state apparatus.<sup>84</sup> It is not until after the Saxon settlements were firmly in place that authority is imposed on the autonomous Vlachs. In a donation of land to the Kerch monastery in 1223, the land granted is “*terram... exemptam de blaccis*” located near “*villa Herrmanni*” and “*villa Ruetel*” [Cisnădie].<sup>85</sup> This donation, taking place decades after the Saxon settlements in the area of modern-day Sibiu, implies that the royal authority had been sufficiently spread for Andrew’s donation to be enforceable, particularly since the land belonged not to the royal domains, but to the Vlachs. This, in turn, serves as evidence that the Vlachs were, by this point, if not within the bounds of the kingdom, which had been successfully extended through use of the Saxon colonies, then at least considered so by Andrew II.

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<sup>84</sup> Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 47.

<sup>85</sup> Andrew II, *Confirmarea donației “montis Sancti Michaelis” și a unui pământ luat de la români în favoarea mănăstirii Kerch*, 1223, Document 2, Fond Capitlul evanghelic C.A. Sibiu, Romanian National Archives, Sibiu Branch. 2.

The Saxon connection to the Vlachs of Transylvania became more valuable to Hungarian rulers as time went on. Their numbers, as well as existence in general in Transylvania at the time of the XII century, is, like the origins of the Szeklers, debated. We know from primary sources that the Vlachs enjoyed property rights and tax levying rights on their land. A document, allegedly written by King Andrew II in 1222, was written to strengthen the position of the Teutonic Order of Knights, then present in the Burzenland (far eastern Transylvania) that:

I have always forgiven them and their people of the payment of any kind of tariff when passing through the land of the Szeklers or the land of the Vlachs...

This document, it turns out, was forged by Hermann de Salza, the Grand Master of the Order, in 1231, by which time they had already been pushed out of their Transylvanian holdings by the royal authorities.<sup>86</sup> As noted by Makkai, however, there is no reason to doubt the credibility of the information that the Vlachs had their own territories and the rights to impose customs fees in the land that was considered theirs, implying some kinds privileges or rights for them as well. De Salza, having also been Grand Master during the Order's stay in Transylvania, would have been familiar with the region and the local administrative systems. One may, therefore, conclude that the Saxon settlement did, in fact, occur in an area inhabited, and to at least some degree, administered by a Vlach populace. While concrete evidence of any complex Vlach administrative system is lacking in the period, the notion that the Vlachs could collect tariffs suggests, at least after Saxon colonization, that 1) they were present in the area, and 2) that a nascent administrative system was present during the stay of the Teutonic Knights in the eastern reaches of Transylvania, and that the land rights of various ethnic groups (at least that of the Vlachs and Szeklers) were

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<sup>86</sup> László Makkai, "Transylvania in the Medieval Hungarian Kingdom (896-1526)," vol. 1 of *History of Transylvania*, ed. Köpeczi et al. (Highland Lakes: Atlantic Research and Publications, Inc, 2001). 431.



respected, or granted, by royal authorities. Friedrich Teutsch, in *Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen für das sächsische Volk*, rightly states that:

The Transylvanian highland was, at the time, under the rule of the Pechenegs. We do not find Romanian population of the land in any believable historical document. Instead, we arrive at the actuality that all history of the Wallachian people north of the Danube from the III to the XII century is missing.<sup>87</sup>

While Teutsch does make a good point in bringing up the lack of documented evidence of Vlach activities north of the Danube, it is important to note that in those nine centuries, the area had mostly been ruled by a series of nomadic invaders and their empires. In addition, the record keeping of anything Transylvanian in Hungary itself is not adequate until well into the XIII century. With the lack of record keeping and, particularly, lack of any Hungarian administrative presence past Albensis before the mid XII century, it is hardly surprising the no Vlachs are attested to being north of the Danube. Therefore, the careful wording of Teutsch is appropriate in mentioning that that history is simply missing. Thus, while the Vlachs are missing in the documents of the XII century, they were certainly in the area, and by 1210, at the latest, they begin to play important roles in Hungarian policy (in this case, foreign intervention in Bulgaria on behalf of Tsar Boril).

The era of the initial colonization of the Saxon Altland in Transylvania shows that the Hungarian kingdom needed an outlet by which to expand their administration eastwards, in order to be able to control the southern Carpathian mountain range. The system of land grants and privileges, already in use in other areas of Hungary, was applied also with surprising liberality to the Saxons, who, by 1224, received a renewal of their old rights as well as grants of others, signifying their importance for the administration. All of this was facilitated by the system of semi-

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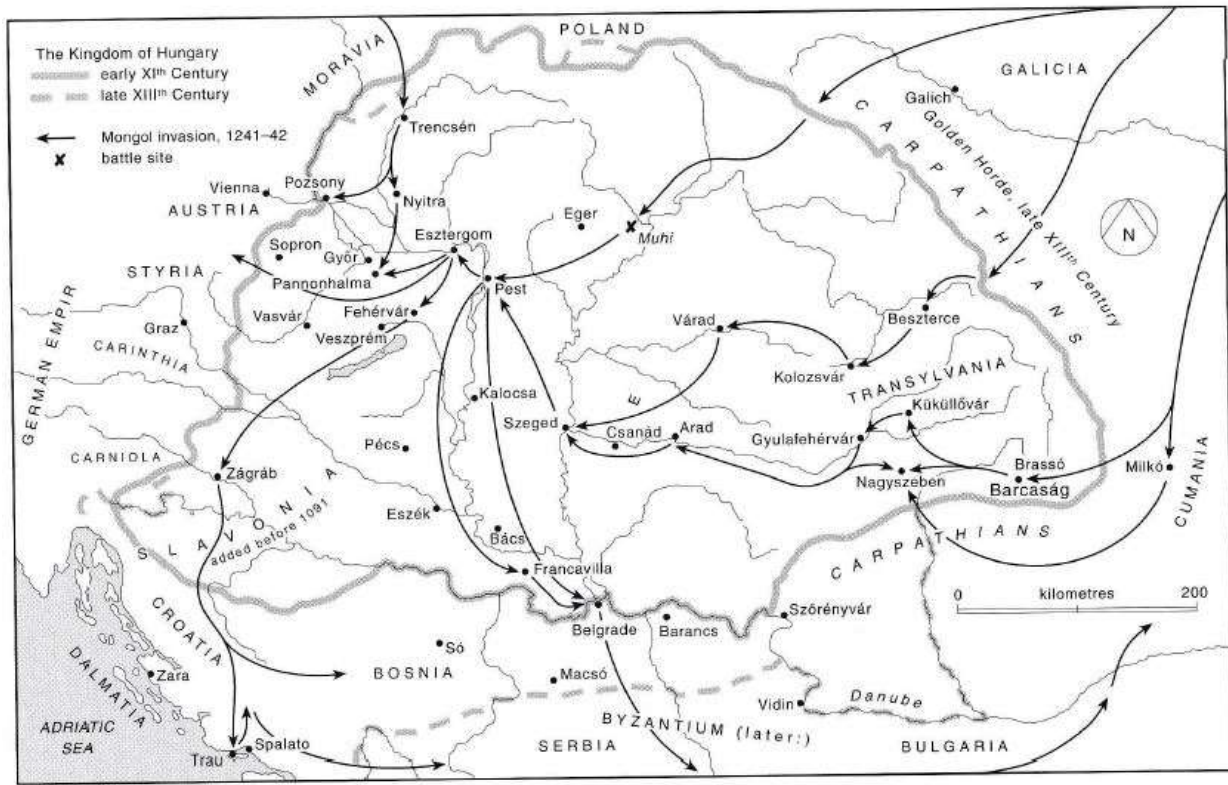
<sup>87</sup> Teutsch, *Geschichte der Siebenbürger*, 5.

autonomous local rule granted to the settlers, rule not seen in areas with Hungarian majorities or in Hungary proper at such an early point in time. This points to special rights granted to the Saxons specifically, including the grant of their own county. The societal roles they played, those of border guards early on, slowly began evolving. Soon their importance would reach critical heights thanks to the societal disturbances that were to follow a few short decades after the *Diploma Andreanum*.

## Chapter II: The Mongol Invasion and its Immediate Aftermath

In 1241, the fortunes of Hungary changed dramatically. The Mongol invasion of that year almost lead to Hungary's collapse as a viable, political entity. After the defeat of King Béla IV at the Battle of Mohi and the destruction of the organs of royal authority throughout the kingdom, Hungary was left in a desperate fight for survival. The Saxons' quick, urban redevelopment kept eastern Transylvania from falling, once more, outside of the Hungarian administrative umbrella. The disturbances of 1241-1242 and the following decades changed the course of the XIII century for the Kingdom of Hungary and affected internal and external policies, as well as the general capabilities of Hungary, for decades. During the invasion, the Saxons lived up to their contractual obligations, as established in the *Diploma Andreanum*, by supplying soldiers for the campaign. Perhaps their most astonishing feat, however, comes in the aftermath of the destruction. The Saxons were able to very quickly rebuild their pre-invasionary urban settlement, which enabled Transylvania to remain tied to royal authority, though just by a thread.

## The Mongols in Hungary



Map 4: The Mongol paths into Hungary.

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After their invasion and subjugation of the Rus' principalities, in 1241 the Mongols under Batu continued their attacks to the West. In a two-pronged attack, they invaded Poland and Hungary, their primary objective being the latter. The Mongol Invasion of 1241 brought disastrous ruin to Hungary. Șerban Papacostea, in *Between the Crusades and the Mongol Empire*, does a remarkable job of narrating the Mongol Invasion of Transylvania and Hungary, and if one would like to further explore this topic, they are encouraged to seek out this source as well as other works on the topic. For the sake of background information, I will provide only a concise narrative in this work, as it is not the purpose of this work to narrate the history of the invasion.

<sup>88</sup> Map: "The medieval kingdom of Hungary," in Berend, *At the Gates of Christendom*, 18.

Before we dive into the invasion itself, let us analyze what the Mongols wanted with Hungary in the first place. Historians, both of the Mongols and of Eastern Europe, ascertain that the invasion was the result of an attempt to settle, not simply raid or occupy, the Pannonian Plains, the grassy plains of Hungary, ideal for horses. Mongol historian David Morgan, in *The Mongols*, argues that the Mongols fully intended to integrate the Hungarian lands into the Mongol Empire, going so far as striking coinage in the short time they were there.<sup>89</sup> Papacostea agrees, stating that the Pannonian Plain would be an ideal base for horsemen, particularly if the aim of the base was to strike further west, into central and western Europe.<sup>90</sup> This is an interesting suggestion, one that I am inclined to agree with. I'm not sure how one would go about, however, trying to prove that the Mongols wished to continue plundering into Central and Western Europe if they had successfully integrated the Pannonian Plain, but that is beyond the scope of this paper. Either way, the fact that they minted coinage, as Morgan mentions, does signify intent not only of a long-term stay, but also of assuming administrative function in the area. Among this pretense for the invasion was the fact that the Hungarians took in the Cumans who had fled from the Mongols, rather than give in with proper submission.<sup>91</sup>

The invasion began suddenly and without notice in the Spring of 1241. The Mongol invasion force, divided into two armies, attacked both Poland and Hungary. The first corps drove deep into Poland, culminating in the Battle of Liegnitz, in which the combined forces of Poles and Germans were crushed by the Mongols, who then proceeded to aid in the invasion of Hungary.

The Mongolian army attacking Hungary was split into two operational units: the main force attacking Hungary proper under Batu, and a secondary force, meant to eliminate resistance in

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<sup>89</sup> Morgan, *The Mongols*, 2nd ed. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 123.

<sup>90</sup> Șerban Papacostea, *Between the Crusade and the Mongol Empire: The Romanians in the 13th Century*, trans. by Liviu Bleoca (Cluj-Napoca: Center for Transylvanian Studies, Romanian Cultural Foundation, 1998), 152.

<sup>91</sup> Morgan, *The Mongols*, 123.

Transylvania under Kadan, Buri, and Budjek. The Transylvanian invasionary force consisted of three detachments: 1) Kadan's corps invaded from the north of Transylvania, striking and taking first Rodna, a mining town in northern Transylvania with a Saxon population, on March 31 and then assaulting Bistriz, also a Saxon settlement, in early April. According to Rogerius, 600 Saxons were taken captive by the Mongols to act as guides going westward into Hungary proper. This corps took the route Dej-Cluj-Zalău-Bihor to reach the Hungarian plains.<sup>92</sup> <sup>93</sup> 2) Buri's corps invaded from the South-East, mostly likely through the Oituz pass, through Țara Bârsei. We know that as the Mongols invaded Cumania<sup>94</sup>, Pousa, twice Voivode of Transylvania, headed an army, which surely included Saxons and other local populations, to halt the Mongol advances in Țara Bârsei, upon the Mongol breakthrough at the Oituz pass.

That all populations in Transylvania resisted and fought against the Mongols is corroborated in Rashīd al-Dīn's *The Successors of Genghis Khan*. The Persian administrator in service of the Mongols wrote that "Qadan and Büri took the field against the *Sasan*<sup>95</sup> people and defeated that people after three battles," "Böchek proceeded by way of the Qara-Ulagh<sup>96</sup>, crossing the mountains of those parts and defeating the *Ulagh*<sup>97</sup> peoples," and "... seized all the territories of the Bashghird<sup>98</sup>, Majar<sup>99</sup>, and Sas<sup>100</sup>...."<sup>101</sup> That Provost Nicholas of Cibinium also fell in battle

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<sup>92</sup> Papacostea *Between the Crusade and the Mongol Empire*, 153-154.

<sup>93</sup> Magister Rogerius, *Carmen Miserabile*, trans. Helmut Stefan Milletich, (Eisenstadt: Burgenländischer PEN-Club, 1979), 75.

<sup>94</sup> "Cumania" refers to the region that would later become the Voivodate of Wallachia, encompassing the modern geographical regions of Muntenia and Oltenia.

<sup>95</sup> That is, Saxon.

<sup>96</sup> "Qara-" meaning "Black," and "Ulagh," a spelling of Olah or Olach, meaning Vlach; thus, Black Vlachia: the territory of Moldavia.

<sup>97</sup> That is, Vlach.

<sup>98</sup> According to Boyle, both "Bashghird" and "Mayar" (Magyar), refers to the Hungarians

<sup>99</sup> See above.

<sup>100</sup> See footnote 92.

<sup>101</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, trans. John A. Boyle, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 70.

in Transylvania show that the Saxons surely lived up to their contractual obligations, those settled in the *Diploma Andreanum*. Buri then led his army to take Albensis and, according with Sălăgean, probably Torda.<sup>102</sup> 3) Budjek led his detachment south of the Carpathians in what was the Bishopric of the Cumans and the Hungarian tributary banates.<sup>103</sup>

The invasion of Transylvania appears to have been delayed, as the main invasion force, under Batu, began the attack much earlier. He invaded Hungary and defeated the royal detachment acting as a border guard on March 12. By March 15, the Mongols had reached the outskirts of Pest. Such a swift advance on behalf of Batu's forces showcased a strategy of terror and raiding, which was mean to cause as much hindrance to the attempts of the Hungarians to draw levies for the royal army east of the Danube. Only by early April were Hungarian armies ready for battle. King Béla IV himself took command of the forces assembled and led them out from Pest to seek out engagement with the Mongol army stationed at the outlet of the Sajo River into the Tisza on April 6. The culmination of the action of April 11, the same day Cibinium fell to Buri's forces, near Mohi, was the utter decimation of the Royal Hungarian Army, which soon found itself completely flanked and encircled by the Mongols. King Béla IV barely escaped with his life, fleeing to Slavonia for his safety. A few days later, Pest found itself assaulted by the Mongol forces, an act which was followed by months of pillaging and ravaging of the lands east of the Danube.<sup>104</sup> The winter brought with it a new season of operations for the Mongols, who conquered Buda and rode into the lands west of the Danube, eventually besieging Strigonium and attempting to seize the rest of the country. This was Batu's doing, and while he was busy mopping up in the North, Kadan

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<sup>102</sup>Tudor Sălăgean, *Transylvania in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century: The Rise of the Congregational System*, in *East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450-1450*, vol. 37, ed. Florin Curta (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 27-28.

<sup>103</sup> Papacostea *Between the Crusade and the Mongol Empire*, 154-155.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 155-156.

took a detachment South to chase Béla IV, who eventually had to take shelter on an island in the Adriatic.<sup>105</sup>

Around this time, the Mongols began taking the reins in the Kingdom of Hungary, installing the campaigning chieftains in roles of administration. Rogerius tells us that the chieftain under which he was servile had 1000 villages under him, also mentioning that there were around 100 such administrators<sup>106</sup>. This again, points to the possibility of a long-term Mongol stay, as they had peasants who had survived come out of hiding to work the fields. But, just as suddenly as they had invaded, in March and April of 1242 the Mongols took their leave, withdrawing through and, once more, pillaging Transylvania.<sup>107</sup>

The devastation in Transylvania, according to Sălăgean, was even more systematic and destructive than after the initial invasion, as the Mongol troops, low on supplies after wintering in a devastated Hungary, took full advantage of the opportunity for looting. Sălăgean also maintains that this supports a theory by Virgil Ciocâltan, quite in contrast to that provided by both Morgan and Papacostea, that the Mongols never intended to stay long-term in Hungary and that they had little interest in Europe or around the Black Sea. Instead, Batu was interested in securing his conquests in the Kipchaq (Cuman) steppes and had interests in Transcaucasia, Asia Minor, in the fertile crescent, and on the Silk Road. This theory is interesting, as it argues the Hungarian invasion was simply meant to decapitate the Hungarian offensive machine, which was previously active across the Carpathian Mountains and even previously engaged Mongols near the Sea of Azov.<sup>108</sup> In any case, this theory does not explain the administrative roles that the Mongols undertook during

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<sup>105</sup> Morgan, *The Mongols*, 123.

<sup>106</sup> Magister Rogerius, *Carmen Miserable*, 87.

<sup>107</sup> Papacostea *Between the Crusade and the Mongol Empire*, 157; and Sălăgean, *Transylvania in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century*, 27-28.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 15-16, 31, 33.



their occupation, or why their withdrawal coincided with the arrival of news of Great Khan Ogedei's death.<sup>109</sup>

Regardless of pretext for invasion or post-invasion intent, Hungary was utterly devastated. The desperation of Hungary is sensed in King Béla IV's letter to the Pope Gregory IX, written in Zagreb on May 18, 1241, pleading for assistance:

... We beg and implore Your Holiness, that your care may come in aid of the Christian people, giving Us and the Hungarian kingdom advice and saving assistance, and to deign to hinder, through Your care, the destruction of the world, such that, in the course of a delay, no matter how small, the wolf, which tears the lamb limb from limb, will not be able to find the victim, on which he wants to pounce.<sup>110</sup>

While King Béla survived the invasion, his kingdom did not fare well, and the legacy left in this area by the Mongols was devastation and the weakening of Hungary for almost a century. Many areas faced the Mongol onslaught twice, with parts of Eastern Hungary and Transylvania being hit the worst, as cities such as Cibinium and Corona were sacked twice and nearly ceased to exist. An example of the sheer destruction can be found in the 31 out of 43 villages in the Oroshaza region of south-eastern Hungary which disappeared as a result of the Mongol invasion. It would take decades for these areas to repopulate.<sup>111</sup>

### The Mongols and Transylvania

Transylvania, already precariously attached to Hungary, was in particular danger thanks to the devastation. The Saxons' administrative centers, the only real source of crown loyalty in south-eastern Transylvania, were in danger of extinction. It was only the hasty reconstruction of these

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<sup>109</sup> Morgan, *The Mongols*, 124.

<sup>110</sup> Béla IV, *Bela al IV-lea regele Ungariei înștiințează pe papa Grigore al IX-lea depre năvălirea Tătarilor în Ungaria*, c323.

<sup>111</sup> Florin Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 411.

centers which helped keep south-eastern Transylvania, and its populations, in the Hungarian empire.

The Mongol invasion crushed the settlement of Cibinium, like many others around it. The Saxon center was stormed again by the Mongols in April of 1242, on their withdrawal to the Steppe. This additional devastation came only one year after the Mongols captured it for the first time.<sup>112</sup> Due to Cibinium's position as a key center of south-eastern Transylvania, any long-term loss of this administrative center would have been disastrous for Hungarian rule in the area. The same is true for other cities of Saxon population. Bistritz, for example, at its peak in 1241 had 100 households with official status as a market. In 1250, we have note of only 15 landowners living on isolated estates, and by 1300, 30.<sup>113</sup> This indicates destruction, but also growth after the destruction. We cannot also, due to the language, determine the relationship between a household and a landowner, or whether multiple households could have been located on one property, as was often the case thanks to the Hungarian practice of conditional service and land. Cibinium, for its part, had a population of probably already around 125 households in the lower town, with several moving from there to the upper town, which had about 40 households. Therefore, towards the middle of the XIII century, according to Paul Niedermaier, the population of Cibinium was around 150 households which was "much smaller than that of Oradea; likewise smaller than those of Alba Iulia [Albensis], Cenad, and Satu Mare [Szathmar-Nemethi] (including Mintiu); approximate to that of Arad and Braşov [Corona/Kronstadt]; but, in those times, larger than the number of families in Cluj or Timișoara [Timis]."<sup>114</sup> According to Harald Roth, the population of Cibinium at the time

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<sup>112</sup> Teutsch, *Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen*. 52.

<sup>113</sup> Niedermaier, *Geneza*; 268, 383, 213.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 175.

of the invasion was 600.<sup>115</sup> What exactly happened in any of these places during the Mongol invasion is hard to ascertain due to an understandable lack of sources.

The large majority of the Transylvanian population was, at the time, rural, and the destruction of the lowlands and valleys had severe consequences for the surrounding centers, which relied on rural peasant labor for both taxes and tithes. Because of the raiding and pillaging which the Mongols carried out in order to procure foodstuffs, the Transylvanian countryside was torn to shreds. Master Roger, a medieval contemporary who lived through the invasion and detailed it in his writing, notes that innumerable masses abandoned their rural homes and fled to the forests (and presumably also the highlands) immediately following the invasion.<sup>116</sup> Had this large population been able to stay in the forests until the Mongols left, the state of the Hungarian kingdom would have perhaps not been so desperate; however, according to Master Roger, these peoples were deceived by the Mongols into coming out of hiding, and forced them to cultivate for the benefit of the Mongol occupation.<sup>117</sup> He writes on the total destruction, as it is explained to him by Cumans and Mongols in a certain incident, that they [the occupiers] “one night all left and surrounded the villages one by one and wetted their swords with the blood of the killed, so that, out of all of the places, only very few [inhabitants], namely those who could hide themselves in the forests and caves survived. As a result, the province was left completely abandoned.”<sup>118</sup>

In the Hungarian administrative region of western Transylvania, particularly in the previously large administrative centers, the destruction was particularly felt by the central authorities. Albensis, for example, was dramatically depopulated, leading contemporaries of the

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<sup>115</sup> Roth, *Hermannstadt*, 8.

<sup>116</sup> Magister Rogerius, *Carmen Misterabile*, 85.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 89.

time to mention in 1246, four years after the departure of the Mongols, that there was a very small population still remaining.<sup>119</sup> Such depopulation of this administrative settlement lowered not only royal authority in Transylvania, but also any semblances of ties to centralized power, including religious. The seat of Bishopric of Transylvania suffered greatly from this issue of depopulation. Master Roger describes the initial scene he came across, while entering the ruins of Albensis, “where one can find nothing other than bones and corpses... [and] the destroyed walls of the cathedral... stained from the... river of Christian blood.”<sup>120</sup> As late as 1271 there is still mention of the “poverty of the seat of Transylvania [seat of the bishopric, i.e. Albensis],” due to the result of the effects of depopulation on taxation and tithes.

This poverty, however, was not solely concentrated on the seat of the episcopate, but applied to the entire bishopric. Such an extent to the damage ensured that the bishopric would be unable to quickly recover from the ordeal. According to Bishop Gall of Transylvania, the diocese “after the spiteful persecution of the Mongols, has come to such a dearth of residents...in Albensis... as also in other holdings of the bishopric, whose names are: Herina, Bylokol de comitatu Dobica, Golou de comitatu Culusiensi, Zylac et Tusnad de [comitatu] Zonuk...”<sup>121</sup>

The issues of the bishopric, moreover, were not its own, as they had serious implications to royal rule in the region. A weak bishopric would be unable to handle the slew of opportunists, who rushed to usurp lands in Transylvania. The speculators included the barons, who were always looking to expand their lands, while at the same time weakening royal authority. To remedy this

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<sup>119</sup> Niedermaier, *Geneza*, 285.

<sup>120</sup> Magister Rogerius, *Carmen Misterabile*, 103.

“Stuhlweißenburg, wo man nichts anderes finden konnte als Knochen und Totenköpfe. Die Mauern der Basiliken und der Paläste waren zerstört und untergraben, sie waren befleckt vom allzugroßen Strom des Christenblutes...”

<sup>121</sup> Béla IV, *Bela al IV-lea regele Ungariei scutește coloniștii așezați pe moșiile episcopului Transilvaniei de jurisdicția voevodului Transilvaniei*, vol. 1 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XI, XII și XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1951), 327-328; I have left these toponyms and the list of toponyms in the original Latin here.

issue, King Stephen IV decreed in 1271 that the revenues of the salt mines at Torda be redirected to the episcopate of Transylvania.<sup>122</sup> That the king allowed the episcopo of Albensis to collect not only the entire salt revenues of the mines of Torda, but also to collect the dues owed by the population to the royal coffers, is telling of the long-term state of “poverty” in which the bishopric was left after the Mongol invasion and of the lengths the King Béla IV went to, in order to remedy the dire Transylvanian situation.<sup>123</sup> In spite of efforts, though, only by the end of the XIII century, over half a century after the first Mongol invasion, did the population levels of Albensis level out and reach pre-invasion levels.<sup>124</sup>

### The Importance of the Saxons in the Immediate Aftermath

The Saxons, after the invasion, were vital in the reconstruction of the region and in the subsequent power struggle between the royal house and the barons that would emerge as a long-term effect of the Mongol destruction. The Saxons would again be used as a tool, with which to bind land to a specific actor and to rebuild a devastated region through colonization. These practices were, moreover, not limited to the extent of the County of Cibinium, but in other areas of Transylvania as well, once other, local rulers began to see the effects of the royal policies in Cibinium.

While most centers in Transylvania were left in a ghastly shape, the Saxon centers were able to recover more rapidly than others. Provost Nicholas, the Vice-chancellor of King Béla IV, was killed while under arms in the defense of Transylvania, like many other religious leaders and nobles of Transylvania, essentially leaving a totally blank slate from which to reset.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup>Stephen V, *Ștefan al V-lea regele Ungariei dăruiește din nou capitlului din Alba-Iulia ocna de sare dela Turda și dreptul de a strânge dela oamenii capitlului darea cuvenită regelui*, vol. 2 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1952), 142.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., Stephen V mentions “the poverty of the capital.”

<sup>124</sup> Niedermaier, *Geneza*, 285.

<sup>125</sup> Teutsch, *Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen*. 50; and Magister Rogerius, *Carmen Miserable*, 63.

Historians have put forward two theories about the repopulation of the countryside and the towns immediately after the invasion. One theory, espoused by Ștefan Pascu, states that new immigration, brought about through newly granted privileges to colonists by the king, was responsible for the repopulation of Transylvania.<sup>126</sup> The second theory, propagated by Tudor Sălăgean, is that the region was rebuilt through the settlement of the survivors not in the countryside, but in the old towns, where new fortifications were erected to protect them.<sup>127</sup>

The reality is that it is impossible to know which contributed more to the repopulation of Saxon Transylvania. I argue, however, that the two theories are both correct and that they represented a mutualistic symbiosis between countryside and town. Without first rebuilding the shattered free towns and market towns and their defensive, administrative, and economic structures, the Cibinium countryside could not have maintained its privileged status, particularly with the political chaos which ensued after the invasion and the large-scale land theft which occurred in the aftermath of the invasion. In addition, without the build-up of the defenses of the free towns, the countryside would not be secure, as the threat of subsequent Mongol raids was very real and was taken very seriously. In contrast, without new colonists and settlers, of one ethnicity or another, the countryside would have (and in some areas, did), remained unproductive regarding large scale economic activity in the form of agricultural production and other activities, such as the mining of both salt and metals. Such a dramatically underpopulated countryside would not have been able to support the needed economic exchange to keep the towns flourishing.

The Saxons of Cibinium must have had success in their rebuilding and repopulation programs, which others soon attempted to emulate. In 1248, Voivode Lawrence, attempted to copy

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<sup>126</sup> Ștefan Pascu, *A History of Transylvania*, trans. D. Robert Ladd, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982), 64.

<sup>127</sup> Sălăgean, *Transylvania in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century*, 37.

the system used by the Hungarian rulers in Cibinium by explicitly granting “...our faithful guests settled in Wynch and Burgbergh, the same as the inhabitants of the County of Scybinium, full exemption [from restrictions on use of the forests, pastures, and waters]” and additional exemption of previous taxation in silver.<sup>128</sup> Lawrence’s privileges attempt to make the settlements of Wynch and Burgbergh just as attractive for new colonists to settle after the invasion, a time when population deficits greatly affected all landowners and lords.

Thus, the Saxons remained an important source of power in the region through their original status as colonizers. This move by Lawrence also indicates two other points of interest: 1) The power of the office of voivode had increased, most certainly thanks to the dip in royal authority over the region, to include administrative tasks in the areas of Transylvania not directly under royal dependency; and 2) that the rulers of Transylvania were competing with the monarch to attract colonists. It should be known, that the Saxon county was not under the jurisdiction of either the voivode or duke, but under the monarch directly, through grant of the charter that created the county, the *Diploma Andreanum*, which had multiple times been renewed by the monarchs following Andrew II. The intent is clearly meant to attract new settlers: an attempt to redevelop the region. But there was also the ability for the voivode to potentially deprave the royal county of the Saxons of its own redevelopment, further hindering re-establishment of royal control over Transylvania. The voivode had every reason to attempt to stifle royal authority in the region, as the County of Cibinium served as a crucial block of support for the Hungarian monarchy in Transylvania against the ambitions of the local magnates and rulers, including those of the voivode himself.

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<sup>128</sup> Lawrence Voivode, *Laurențiu voevodul Transilvaniei acordă Sașilor din Vinț și Vurpăr mai multe scutiri pentru folosirea pădurilor, pășunilor și apelor și le fixează dările față de visterie*, vol. 1 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XI, XII și XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1951), 334-335.

### Chapter III: Long-term Effects

The destruction caused by the invasion of 1241-1242 caused drastic changes in the administrative and martial facets of Hungarian policy, particularly in relation to the people groups of Transylvania. The general administrative procedures were also changed, as the total disorganization at the time led to many usurpations and land disputes between the nobility, which often had to be settled through the intermediary of the king himself. It was in this period, more than ever, that Transylvania was vital in holding the kingdom together. While other areas were greatly depopulated, Transylvania still had people groups that were not affected so strongly by the Mongol invasions, namely the Vlachs and Pechenegs. Major changes in policy began mostly in the 1250's, once Hungary had recovered from the initial shock of the invasion. In the end, it was upon the Vlachs and Pechenegs, among others, that Hungary leaned in its times of troubles.

Following the invasion, reform was needed to settle land disputes, which rose sharply, thanks to opportunistic nobles seeking to enlarge their own domains. To attempt to address such issues, administrative organs stepped in to facilitate proof of ownership in writing, which contrasted with the traditional methods of oral testimony from neighbors, relatives, and friends. The majority of contemporary documents from the 1240's, 50's, and 60's detail a sharp increase in land disputes, royal or ecclesiastical land settlements, land sales, and taxation issues. Sale of land, which was now agreed upon in front of a notary of ecclesiastical distinction, often the bishop of Transylvania for sales between large landowners, became a regular phenomenon. Land disputes could often require large investigations and intermediaries to broker peace, such as in the agreement documented (1256) by the head of the church in Varad, in western Transylvania, with part of the judgement being based on ancestral ownership from before the Mongol invasion: "...in the same manner that their father had it [the right to collect customs] and their other ancestors



before the time of the Mongols.”<sup>129</sup> Transfers of land were also now done in front of official intermediaries of this state. An example of such land transfers is that of the land called *Zek*, in the Three Seats County. The land, before the invasion, belonged to the Fulkun the Saxon and it was transferred to Count Vincent, son of Akadas of Sepsi (Sepsi was a Szekler domain within the administrative limits of the Saxon county). The document details the land as having been deserted and left without inhabitants. The details of the transfer are left to the discretion of Lawrence, Voivode of Transylvania and Count of Volkou.<sup>130</sup>

The nature of the destruction required action not only on the part of authorities within Hungary, but also that of external ecclesiastical authorities. The pope frequently intervened in Hungarian affairs after the invasion, usually on behalf of devastated parishes and bishoprics, in order to facilitate the reconstruction of the ecclesiastical lands. The pope’s intervention most frequently involved financial matters of the episcopates of Hungary, in this case, specifically that of Transylvania. In 1255, the pope was compelled to grant the bishop of Transylvania an increased revenue, due to the fact, according to Pope Alexander IV’s letter, that the canons of the episcopate are not able to cover their needs with their services.<sup>131</sup> In other words, for the episcopal canons, even almost 15 years after the initial invasion, were not earning livable income, given the levels of revenue granted to the bishopric before papal intervention in 1255.

The trend of massive decentralization of the Hungarian state began following the massive defeat at the hands of the Mongols. The defense of the country was essentially to depend on local

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<sup>129</sup> *Capitulul din Oradea confirmă înțelegerea dintre Ladislau și Toma, fiii lui Pancrațiu, cu comitele Paul și fiii săi cu privire la hotărnicirea unor moșii*, vol. 2 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1952), 16-18.

<sup>130</sup> Béla IV, *Bela al IV-lea regele Ungariei dăruiește comitelui Vicențiu, fiul lui Akadas Secuiul, moșia Zek din comitatul Trei Scaune*, vol. 2 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1952), 5-6.

<sup>131</sup> Alexander IV, *Papa Alexandru al IV-lea aprobă cererea episcopului Transilvaniei privitoare la mărirea veniturilor bisericii din Alba-Iulia*, vol. 2 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1952), 14.

resistance, particularly in the now even more distant eastern Transylvanian periphery, that administered by the Saxons and the Szeklers. The policies set in place essentially give orders to the churches, nobles, and towns of the realm: “be ready to defend yourselves.”

Changes in administration also occurred regarding to the defense of the kingdom. Among the most vital reforms introduced by Béla IV, after the invasion of 1241-42, was the end of the royal stone monopoly. Before the 1241, the Hungarian kings held a monopoly on fortifications made of stone, and seldom granted sanction for their construction, in fear that in case of upheaval or rebellion, they would have to take the stone fortresses by force. It was for the very breaking of this rule that the kings evicted the Teutonic Order from the Burzenland in 1225.

With this decree, the baronial class was not only allowed to construct their own fortifications of stone, but actively encouraged to do so through royal land grants meant to compensate the barons for the costs of construction.<sup>132</sup> Béla IV essentially placed power in much of the countryside directly into baronial hands. He did not, however, have much of a choice: the barons were still powerful, especially in relation to the king, as royal power was so weakened and the threat of a subsequent invasion so great, that in theory, this would have been the best path. However, what ensued was the extreme decentralization of power.

Permanent land donations became particularly troublesome for the king. In contrast to regular, conditional donations, the permanent donations were hereditary and to be passed on indefinitely, without guarantee of continued loyalty or any real obligations outside of the initial ones promised. As such donations were necessary after the invasion in order to rebuild and gain baronial support, Béla IV and his successors traded the long-term stability of their kingdom in order to gain short-term support. These donations, of course, only served to further weaken the

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<sup>132</sup> Berend, *At the Gates of Christendom*, 3.

royal authority of the monarchy both in the short- and long-term, as significant parts of the royal estate were granted to the emerging noble and ever-strengthening baronial classes.<sup>133</sup> Among those titles which benefited from the imbalance between baronial and royal authority are ones concerned with this study of Transylvania: the Duke (Stephen), and the title of Voivode, the holders of which continuously amassed power throughout the rest of the century, resulting in the near independence of the region from the kingdom at the end of the century and into the XIV century. Not only had the king no means to enforce his will—except through loyal barons—, but now, the strongholds of the autonomy-seeking barons, always weary of royal authority as a threat to their own interests, now had the means to construct their own defenses. What's more, they were compensated for it from the king's own coffers.

The effect of this new construction scheme was that by 1270, of 63 stone castles (both newly constructed or rebuilt), 30 lay in baronial hands.<sup>134</sup> The ratio of ownership changed even more dramatically in the years to, with 88 out of 110 castles constructed from 1270 to 1300 being out of royal hands, belonging to either the aristocracy or the church.<sup>135</sup>

Normally, this increase in fortification would be beneficial to the defense of the country from outside threats. The issue, however, arises when one looks at where these fortifications were being constructed: the western and northern parts of the country, areas of baronial and kindred domination. Those eastern border regions that did belong to the barons, including those those first penetrated by the Mongols, were hardly touched by these building programs, in contrast the the projects in other regions of Hungary.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Papacostea, *Between the Crusade and the Mongol Empire*, 240.

<sup>134</sup> 63 is the number of stone castles, whose ownership is actually known, 5 others exist, but we are not certain of their ownership.

<sup>135</sup> Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan*, 274.

<sup>136</sup> Berend, *At the Gates of Christendom*, 33.

The autonomous regions of Transylvania were left to defend their borders after the post-invasionary collapse of royal authority. In addition to the imposing fortifications being built by the barons in the other parts of the country, the Saxon and Szekler ecclesiastical centers and chartered towns of Transylvania also erected their own defenses. Fortified walls were brought up, for example, at the monastery at Kerch, as well as the Michaelskirche in Michaelsberg (Photos 1 & 2).<sup>137</sup> In the towns, the old town walls were rebuilt, and some, such as those at Cibinium, were reinforced with a second ring (Photo 3).<sup>138</sup>



Photo 1: The Michaelskirche, photographed from a distance, showing hilltop position and fortifications.

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<sup>137</sup> Michaelsberg is now known as Cisnădioara; Sălăgean, *Transylvania in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century*, 42.

<sup>138</sup> Roth, *Hermannstadt*, 11.

<sup>139</sup> Photo taken by author, June 2017.



Photo 2: The Michaelskirche from the interior courtyard of the defensive perimeter. The defensive walls of the church can be seen surrounding the complex.

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Photo 3: The Council Tower of Sibiu served as the entrance gate for the second ring of defensive walls of Cibinium in the XIII century.

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In 1260, Béla found himself at war with Ottokar II, King of Bohemia, in a dispute over the duchy of Styria, of which Béla's son, Stephen, was duke. The conflict strained Hungary's resources, as Ottokar, also Duke of Austria by marriage, was able to amass vast amounts of

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<sup>140</sup> Photo taken by author, June 2017.

<sup>141</sup> Photo: <http://romaniatourism.com/sibiu.html>

resources against a Hungary, which only two decades earlier had been reduced to rubble. The conflict materialized, in its final form, in 1260 at the Battle of Kressenbrunn. This battle is an important chapter in the analysis of the changes of such policies, as it gives the researcher an important view in how Hungary was able to stand up to its adversaries after its defeat: the use of its ethno-regional groups, particularly those of its east. Though the Bohemians won the battle, important details regarding the Hungarian forces emerged. King Ottokar wrote to the pope that Béla was allied to “innumerable masses of inhuman peoples, Cumans, Hungarians and various Slavs, Szeklers as well as Vlachs, Pechenegs, and Muslims, Schismatics as well, such as Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs and Bosnian heretics.”<sup>142</sup> As Papacostea points out, the list seems to be organized regionally, as the Hungarians and Cumans were both located in the central Hungarian plains, while Slavs, Szeklers, Vlachs, and Pechenegs were in Transylvania. The rest, namely the “schismatics” would have been from the southern reaches of Hungary: Croatia, Slavonia, Rama, and Serbia. What is important in our case is the description of Slavs, Szeklers, Vlachs, and Pechenegs, that is, the Transylvanians. Note should be taken that the Saxons are not among those present in the letter. It could be that Ottokar did not deem it appropriate to associate the “inhuman peoples” with the Saxons, as he himself levied many of his troops from German populations. No document that I have found states anything of the Saxons of Transylvania being freed from their duties to provide men for military campaigns, such as stipulated in the *Diploma Andreanum*. I would, therefore, conclude that there should be no reason that Saxons were not included in Béla’s force, and that they simply were not included in Ottokar’s account of the forces fielded by the Hungarian sovereign.

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<sup>142</sup> Ottokar’s letter quoted in Papacostea, *Between the Crusade and the Mongol Empire*, 285.

“...innumeram multitudinem inhumanorum hominum, Cumanorum, Ungarorum et diversorum Sclauorum, Siculorum quoque et Valahorum, Bezzerminorum, et Ismaelitarum, Schismaticorum etiam, utpote Grecorum, Bulgarorum, Rasiensium et Bosnensium hereticorum.”

Given Ottokar's account, we should note that the key piece of information is the participation of Vlachs and Pechenegs, which, as described in the *Diploma Andreanum*, were located on the land that the Saxons first settled, that from Waras to Barolt, in south-eastern Transylvania.<sup>143</sup> This makes clear, then, that those peoples were thoroughly integrated into the Hungarian administrative system through the settlement of the Saxons in the XII and XIII centuries. It also corroborates the fact that the peoples integrated by this internal colonialism were used to fight on behalf of the Hungarian kings.

Changes in royal policy towards the Transylvanian indigenous populations and the quick rebuilding of stately authority in the County of Cibinium following the invasion allowed Hungary to survive the brutal years immediately following the invasion. These populations, namely the Vlachs and Pechenegs, were now called to serve the king not only locally, but across the kingdom. This should be noticed as a stark contrast from Count Joachim's expedition in aid of Tsar Boril of Bulgaria in 1210, as those levies represented a local effort and a local force.<sup>144</sup> The multi-ethnic and imperial force raised by Béla IV and Stephen in 1260 at the Battle of Kressenbrunn represents an empire in action, drawing resources by means of an imperial hold on peripheral territories and actors. What differentiates ante-invasion from post-invasion Hungary in this respect is the frequency in which Vlachs and other Transylvanian peoples integrated by the Saxon colonies (namely Pechenegs and Slavs in the north) appear in documents, as well as the vastly different zones of operation in which they operated. Thus, following the successful integration of the Saxons through colonization and through their use of "others," by this time, the use of "others" became a mainstream royal practice. It was upon reliance on levies and mercenaries from these indigenous

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<sup>143</sup> Andrew II, *Andrei al II-lea regele Ungariei întărește coloniștilor teutoni...*, 208-209.

<sup>144</sup> Năgler's dating: Năgler, *Așezarea sașilor în Transilvania*, 15.

communities that Béla fought off those who wished to profit from the unfortunate status of the kingdom.

### Internal Enemies

By the 1260's, though the countryside and towns were slowly recovering from the invasion, the lords and burghers did not necessarily find their way back into royal hands. As the countryside was recovering, so too was the power of the magnates and titular lords to reject the royal authority and act independently. This shift goes beyond the simple usurpations and land grabs which occurred directly in the aftermath of the Mongol invasion, as it represented a long-term issue, which would continue to plague the kings of Hungary, particularly until the end of the Arpad dynasty in 1301 with the death of Andrew III. In the 1260's, rulers fought internal wars over Transylvania and the Saxons would, in the 1270's, stage a full-blown rebellion over their fate in the kingdom.

As Béla was fighting the external enemies of the kingdom with the help of the eastern people groups, internal struggles were arising within the kingdom. Béla's son, co-regent (as junior king), heir to Hungary and Croatia, and Duke of Transylvania (to his coronation as king in 1270) and Styria (to 1260), Stephen (later Stephen V), was a constant thorn in the side of his father, fighting for independent rule in his lands, particularly Transylvania. The conflict between the local rulers and lords, the voivodes, junior King Stephen, and King Béla IV reached proportions of full-blown civil war in the 1260s. After the loss of his title as Duke of Styria after the Battle of Kressenbrunn in 1260, Stephen cemented his rule over Transylvania, with all attempts made to essentially break away from the authority of his father and rule independently in the region. In addition to attempting to drum up his own support through the privileges granted by the voivode to foreign settlers, he also granted his supporters privileges in Transylvania. According to the peace



treaty of 1262 between the kings, Hungary was essentially split: the two kings were not to cross one another's territory, nor to bother the barons of the other. It became, in effect, two states within one kingdom.<sup>145</sup>

The internal strife, however, did not cease. The argument over the right for the younger king to rule independently carried on throughout the rest of the life of Béla IV, until his death and the subsequent coronation of Stephen as Stephen V in 1270. By 1264, the infighting had become so venomous, that Pope Urban IV intervened. In his letter to Béla in the same year, the pope expressed his sadness at the fact of father and son fighting and their utilization of indigenous groups and foreign groups to fight one another. Urban specifies that Stephen has in mind the idea to call the Cumans to his aid against his father, and his father, Béla, plans to call the pagans of Livonia against his son, which he calls more saddening than even the Mongol invasion. He then proceeds to threaten excommunication if the fighting does not cease.<sup>146</sup> It is not necessary the infighting that is causing such anger to the pope, but rather, the use by both parties of specific groups in their conflict. By using Cumans and Livonian pagans, both groups are guilty of conspiracy, however, the specific use of pagans by the Béla is what warranted the threat of excommunication from the Church. As such, the pattern of reliance on the "others" of the kingdom has stuck with the rulers of Hungary since their existence within the administrated realm. However, this dependence and use of the ethnic "others" of Hungary did not always come to desirable outcomes.

The Saxons' rebellion of 1277 against the local rulers had a multitude of factors leading to its seemingly sudden manifestation. It was not simply a conflict over the right to autonomy, but

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<sup>145</sup> Stephen V, *Ștefan ducele Transilvaniei încheie pace cu tatăl său Bela al IV-lea regele Ungariei*, vol. 2 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1952), 44-49.

<sup>146</sup> Urban IV, *Papa Urban al IV-lea îndeamnă pe Bela al IV-lea regele Ungariei să se împace cu fiul său Ștefan ducele Transilvaniei*, vol. 2 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1952), 59-60.

rather was part of a greater issue of the collapse of royal authority in the region. The ambitions and usurpations of the barons and titular lords occurred all over the kingdom. For the king, losing control of the County of Cibinium to the voivode meant a collapse of the among the last semblences of royal authority in eastern Transylvania. This loss would have meant the loss of not only the Saxons as a tool in the royal arsenal, but also the loss of the crown's source of Vlachs and Pechenegs, which by this time, were essential in propping up the Hungarian state.

The short reign of King Stephan V (1270-1272) was followed by the rule of Ladislaus IV, the son of Stephen, who was just 10 years old at the time of his father's death. The ascension of Ladislaus to the throne put the Hungarian system into an even further spiral. Ladislaus' reign was one of absolute chaos for Hungary. Due to the infantile nature of Ladislaus and the already emasculated royal image in the realm, the royal authority in the peripheral regions continued to plunge and royal lands continued to shift into noble and ecclesiastical hands.

In Transylvania, it was the Csák kindred that most strongly coalesced their power in the region and took hold of it. At the same time, the revolving door of voivodes of Transylvania makes the story somewhat difficult to follow. Matthew Csák served four separate terms as voivode within the period 1270-1277, which saw twelve voivodeships, with other Csák brethren and members of other kindreds being assigned power in the interim. In an attempt to finally solidify superiority over the region, Matthew attempted to restore the powerful duchy previously held by King Stephen V. Terms such as "duke" and "Duchy" curiously reappear years after the dissolution of the original Duchy with the ascension of Duke Stephan as king of all of Hungary.<sup>147</sup> The threat for the Saxons who lived within the privileged County of Cibinium was very real. Matthew and the Csák kindred fought within the administrative structures to resect the county from the royal domain and to attach

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<sup>147</sup> Sălăgean, *Transylvania in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century*, 118.

it instead to the office of the voivode, as well as the Bishopric of Transylvania. This would serve to reduce Cibinium County to local rule both politically and religiously, as well as give the new duke/voivode control over all of Transylvania.

To simplify a complex power struggle, a series of power transfers were initiated and completed. Two steps were needed in order to complete the operation: 1) the relegation of the status of the provost of Cibinium to being responsible to the bishop of Transylvania; and 2) the transfer of the title of count of Cibinium to someone bound to the title of voivode. The result was that Ban Alexander of Severin was granted the county of Cibinium and became, thus, the count of the Saxons of that county. However, as per the *Diploma Andreanum*, the count is to be responsible not to the local authorities, but the king, so simply having Alexander as count meant nothing in consolidating this part of the kingdom into the Csák domains. To complete the transfer, the Count of Doboka, Mykud was raised to the position of Ban of Severin and the title of Count of Doboka, bound to the voivode, was granted to Alexander, now Count of Cibinium and Doboka. In the ecclesiastical space, the provost of Transylvania, Nicholas Kán, who was supported by the Csák kindred in his various, scandalous candidatures for holy office, was one of the two candidates for Archbishop of Strigonium. His placement on the seat would have led to a request by the bishop of Transylvania for the transfer of the Provostship of Cibinium to the local episcopal authority: himself.<sup>148</sup>

Rather than see their status relegated to vassals of the voivode, on Reminiscere Sunday 1277 (February 21) the Saxons rose up in force and assaulted the episcopal seat of Albensis.<sup>149</sup> A document dated 1278, in which King Ladislaus IV grants the Albensis the right, once more, to collect from the royal salt revenues at Torda, states that the devastation caused cannot be remedied

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 119, 121.

<sup>149</sup> Teutsch, *Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, 58-59.

but through royal assistance. The document also mentions that the human loss was horrific: almost all of the canons of the Transylvanian Bishopric and landed persons of the area were killed while taking refuge in the cathedral of the seat of Transylvania in Albensis, which was then set on fire by the revolting Saxons.<sup>150</sup> The Saxons, and the leader of the revolt, Count Gaan of Ocna Sibiului, were subsequently excommunicated by the ecclesiastical leadership of Hungary in 1278.<sup>151</sup>

The attempted take-over of the County of Cibinium by the local authorities only served as a catalyst to begin the conflagration in the region. In addition, it was not only the Cibinium Saxons that rose up, but Saxons from all over Transylvania which joined in the destruction. The destruction was great not only in baronial and ecclesiastical holdings, but also the royal holdings that were swept away in the revolt. Sălăgean argues that this conflagration was part of a much broader period of rivalries raging throughout all of Hungary between the kindreds who were fighting one another to suture as much of power seeping from the royal power base to their own kindreds.<sup>152</sup>

I believe that Sălăgean has the situation correctly pointed out, as the end of the line of royal rulers in Transylvania<sup>153</sup> left the Saxons of Cibinium County with no royal authority to which to be bound. By this point, the Saxon privileges in the County of Cibinium were cemented so strongly, that they would rather revolt and risk war being brought to their land, than give up their autonomy. The political situation, of course, was able to take advantage of this self-conception.

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 59; and Ladislaus IV, *Ladislaus al IV-lea regele Ungariei dăruiește bisericii din Alba-Iulia, distrusă de Sașii din Transilvania, ocna de sare de la Turda și scutește oameni capitului de toate dările regale*, vol. 2 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1952), 189-190.

For Latin, see:

Ladislaus IV, *König Ladislaus IV. schenkt dem Weissenburger Kapitel eine Salzgrube zu Thorda und befreit die Hörigen des Kapitels von der königlichen Steuer*, vol. 1 of *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, ed. Franz Zimmermann and Carl Werner (Hermannstadt: Herausgegeben von Ausschuss des Vereines für siebenbürgische Landeskunde, 1892), 133-134.

<sup>151</sup> *Mai mulți prelați din Transilvania și Ungaria excomunică pe Goan, fiul lui Alard și pe Sașii din Transilvania pentru distrugerea bisericii din Alba-Iulia*, vol. 2 of *Documente privind istoria României, C. Transilvania. Veacul XIII*, ed. Mihail Roller (București: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, 1952), 193-195.

<sup>152</sup> Sălăgean, *Transylvania in the Second Half of the Thirteenth Century*, 122.

<sup>153</sup> After the end of the ducal reign of Stephan (Stephen V) in 1270.

The reality, likely, is that on one side, the bishops of Transylvania had always wanted to usurp the Provostship of Cibinium, dating back to the ecclesiastical squabbles which broke out as soon as the provostship was first sanctioned by Pope Clandestine III in 1191. In addition, the Saxons' position in the County of Cibinium, with its connections to not only their own labors and population, but also to large areas dominated by Vlachs in the highlands and forests there. These populations, as we have previously seen, have played part even on the national stage, on the complete opposite side of the kingdom, in what today is part of Austria, in the Battle of Kressenbrunn. It is reasonable to assume that the local lords, particularly the voivodes, would have much appreciated the chance to partake in the fruits of these connections.

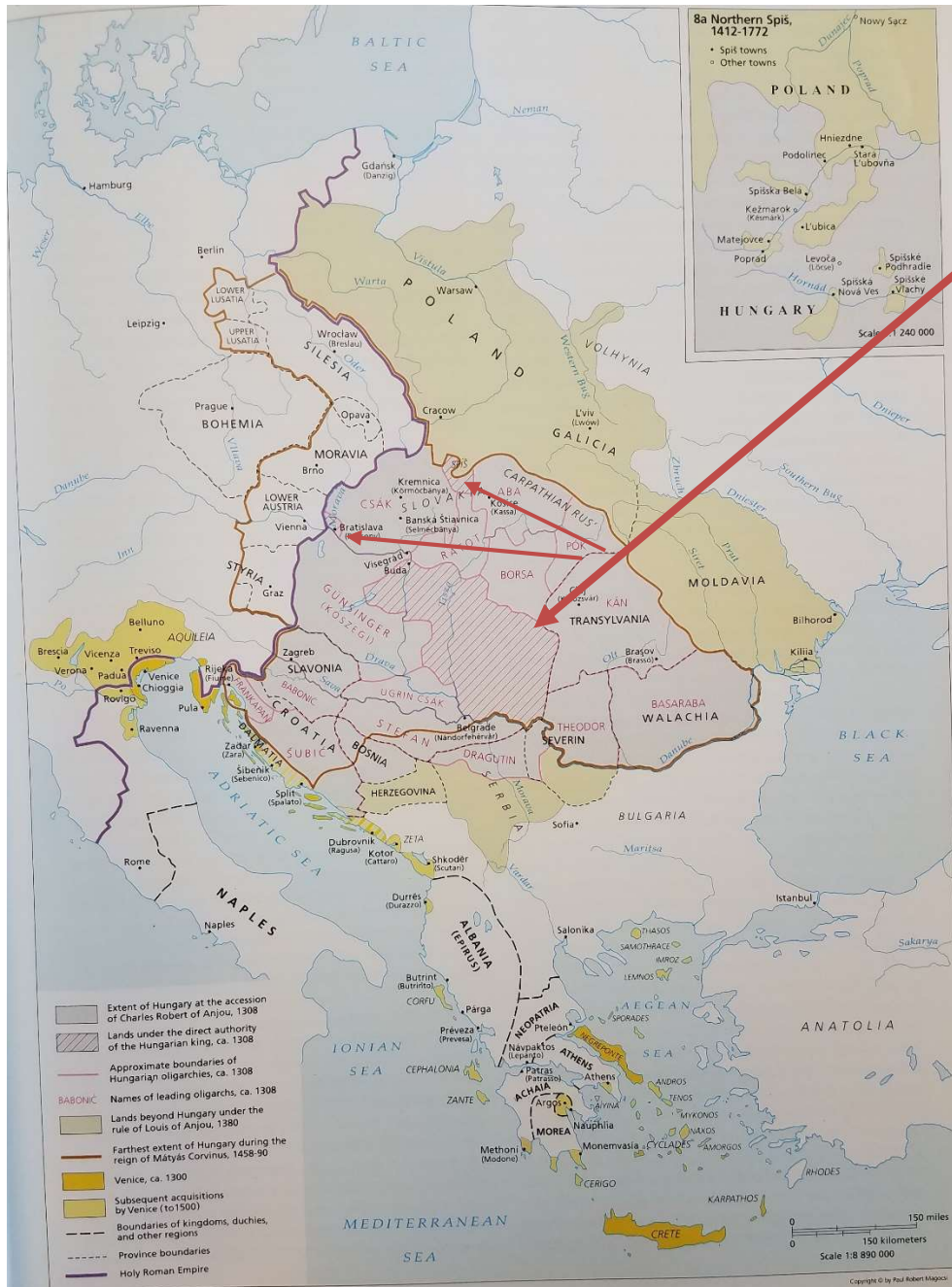
The scramble by Matthew Csák to integrate the Saxons' county into his titular sovereignty also reflects previous trends in the power struggles over Transylvania. It was only with the Saxon's colonization that the Hungarian sovereign finally was able to consolidate power in this previously peripheral province. Powerful voivodes were necessary in times of trouble, or often times, created the times of trouble. Voivode Pousa, as one may remember, called upon the populations of Transylvania and led them into Cumania to repel the Mongols before they could breach the mountains. Duke (later King) Stephan had the provost of Cibinium as the vice-chancellor of his rebellious duchy. Matthew Csák was consolidating his rule over the region, preparing to set up a realm similar in attitude to that of Stephan V; it is little wonder that he desired the Saxons' power-base of Cibinium and its connections to various other pools of peoples under his rule. However, the desirability for rule over these "others" was, in some cases, not political.

Ladislaus IV, like no monarch before him, paid special attention to the "others" of the empire, specifically to the Cumans. His preference for the Cumans above other groups in the kingdom gave him the title "the Cuman," and his obsession with their culture and his lack-luster

management of his proper duties resulted in a constant decline of the royal authority in the face of the aristocracy.<sup>154</sup> Raised in Cuman tradition by his Cuman mother—Queen Elizabeth (wife of Stephan V)—Ladislaus converted to Cuman paganism and left behind his royal duties to live amongst the Cumans. This time is known as one of great crisis for Hungary, as it would lead not only to the excommunication of Ladislaus, but also to a period of oligarchic rule in Hungary that would take his successors decades to rectify. The rule of the barons led to such crises as exemplified by the attempts of Matthew Csák to solidify rule over Transylvania (See Map 5 for the situation in Hungary by 1308). The years following, namely the rest of the 8th and 9th decades of the XIII century saw this spiral continue.

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<sup>154</sup> Teutsch, *Geschichte der Siebenbürger Sachsen*, 58.



Map 5: This map shows the internal situation in Hungary by the final coronation of King Charles Robert in 1308. Notice the hashed red lines in central Hungary, which show the lands under direct rule of the king. The rest of the kingdom is split between dominant baronial families or autonomous areas. Autonomous areas, such as those of the Saxons, are not shown.

After Ladislaus' 1290 assassination at the hands of his own Cuman brethren, Andrew III, grandson of Andrew II, took the throne, as Ladislaus had no children. The last of the Árpád dynasty, Andrew inherited the country under impossible conditions. Immediately upon his

<sup>155</sup> Paul Robert Magocsi, "Hungary-Croatia and Venice, 14<sup>th</sup>- 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries," *Historical Atlas of East Central Europe* (University of Washington Press, 1993), 8.

coronation, his rule was contested by numerous foreign claimants to the Hungarian throne.<sup>156</sup> The state of Hungary continued to devolve simply due to inertia, such that the situation was irrecoverable given the conditions during his rule, and by his death in 1301, little had been accomplished to reverse the situation, despite evidence of his competence as a ruler.

What followed was a period of civil war, rival claimants to the throne, and pretenders taking advantage of the situation, all of which delighted the barons, who were at the advantage of being able to play off the rival factions to their advantage. By 1290, the Voivodate of Transylvania had usurped more power than ever, and the rule of its voivode had become solidified in the decades of instability. It was eventually the Voivode of Transylvania at the time, Ladislas Kán, who would grant the right for Charles Robert to be crowned with the royal crown in 1308, which, until then, had been in Ladislas Kán's possession.

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<sup>156</sup> Cartledge, *The Will to Survive*, 32.



## Conclusion:

Transylvania played a vital role in Hungarian history in the high and late medieval periods, greatly shaping the royal policy, administratively and martially, around proto-ethnic ideas. It was a periphery that was brought into the Hungarian empire by means of colonization, which resulted from the desire of the Hungarian kings to push their frontiers eastward, in accordance with their ambitions of eastern expansion. The “others” of Transylvania played a tremendous role in this process of integration, as the settlers themselves, the Saxons, were themselves a group originating from various parts of the Holy Roman Empire, but mostly from the Rhine-Moselle region.

Following the initial colonization of the Altland, I argue that ethnicity or a view toward “otherness” dictated the policies implemented by both monarchs and other administrative organs of the Hungarian state. The initial Saxon colonization occurred with an eye to eastern ambitions of the monarch and an appetite for expansion, specifically formulated to be dependent on royal, rather than baronial, influence, while at the same formulated to be privileged and self-administrative. The monarchs, by utilizing the granting of rights and privileges to the Saxons, were able to construct an administrative system, which brought into the royal arsenal not only the new settlers, but also the indigenous peoples of south-eastern Transylvania.

It is the case that even before the Mongol invasion, the indigenous peoples of Transylvania proved their use to the Crown. It was the Vlachs and Pechenegs who accompanied the levies of Saxons and Szeklers of Count Joachim of Cibinium in 1210 into Bulgaria. As such, these indigenous Transylvanian peoples, the Vlachs and Pechenegs, played important roles locally even before their introduction into the kingdoms’ national apparatuses. Following the Mongol invasion, the apparatuses of Hungary depended more than ever on these Transylvanian peoples to assert both individual and stately interests. In this sense, ethnic-based policy continued and even extended to

the groups of the Vlachs and Pechenegs of Transylvania, who were autonomous before the colonial projects in the region. These policies would only serve as the foundation of a long and complex history of ethnic interactions in Transylvania.

The Vlachs (later known as Romanians), Saxons, Hungarians, and Szeklers would go on to constitute the four “nations” or “estates” of Transylvania in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and beyond (the Romanian/Vlach Estate was later banned). This multi-ethnic history of Transylvania has still not ended, as significant populations of Hungarians (now including Szekler populations) still call Transylvania, now a part of Romania, home. The story of the Germans of Transylvania (Transylvanian Saxons and Swabians, who arrived later) continued to the end of the Second World War, when many were evicted from their ancestral homes and relocated to Germany, while most of the remnants of this once sizeable population fled Romania after the collapse of the Iron Curtain in 1989. Romanian revolution made repatriation to Germany possible, which was bolstered by German promises of citizenship based on ancestry. Today, in all of Romania, only a few thousand citizens with German ancestry remain.

The value in this essay is that it lays the foundation for studies of later issues of ethnicity and policy in Transylvania, which have been, and still are, issues of contention between the administrators and residents. While the issues themselves have shifted, along with the ownership of the land, the ideas of ethnic-based policy and autonomy still reign in the society and politics of the surrounding region.

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## APPENDIX A

### Diploma Andreanum (1224):

“In the name of the Holy Trinity, one and inseparable. Andrew, by the mercy of God, king of Hungary, Dalmatia, Croatia, Rama, Serbia, Galicia, and Lodomeria forever...

And so, tuning Our ears with usual mercifulness to their rightful pleading, would like to make known to those present and those in the future that We, following in the pious footsteps of Our ancestors and moved from the bottom of Our heart, have renewed their [the Saxons'] rights from earlier. Such that the whole population from Waras [present-day Orăștie] to Boralt [Boralt], together with the land of the Szeklers of Sebus [Sepsi] and with the land Daraus [Draos] to be one people and to administer itself under one judge, pulling out by the root all the counties, except that of Sibiu [Cibinium]. And the count of Sibiu, whoever it may be, will not dare to appoint any governor in the above stated county, except only from amongst they who live amongst him, and the people will elect he who seems most fit. And no one in the county of Sibiu will dare to purchase governorship with money. But for the use of Our coffers will be yearly debtors of a payment of five hundred silver Marks. We want that no conditional noble lords, or anyone else who finds themselves in their borders, to be exempted from this payment, except those who will enjoy a privilege specifically for this. We also permit, that the money for which they will be in debt as is established as payable to Us, will not be measured with another measurement except with the silver Mark, which was adopted by Our father Béla, of fond memories, that is: with four and a half fertuns, after the measurement of Sibiu, together with the denar of Cologne, so that the weight has no difference. And those sent, which will be appointed by the royal majesty for the collection of this money, should not be left unpaid, for everyday that they spend there, of 3 lotones [3/16 of a Mark] for their expenditures.

They will provide five hundred soldiers in royal expeditions within the of the borders of the kingdom and one hundred for outside the borders if the king goes in person, and if he sends a servant outside of the kingdom instead, or to the assistance of one of his friends, or on his own business, they will need to provide only fifty soldiers. Not even the king will be able to ask for more, nor will they be required to send [more].

They will select their priests themselves freely; those chosen they will announce and will pay the tithe and will respond, in all ecclesiastical rights, to them following the old ways.

We wish to declare, with emphasis, that no one will judge them, except Us or the count of Sibiu, whom We will appoint in his place and time. But under whatever judge they find themselves, will be judged under the normal rights and no one will dare call them before Us, except them when their situation cannot be decided in front of their judge.

And outside of what has been said above, I have given them the forest of the Vlachs and Pechenegs, together with the waters, so they may use them together with the above named Vlachs and Pechenegs and that they not be indebted with any service for this, enjoying themselves the above-named liberty. Then I have also decided that they will have a single seal, which will be well known to Us and to Our magnates.

And if one of them wishes to settle with someone a financial situation, they will not be able to use other witnesses in front of the judge, except people who are found in their borders, We exempting them of any foreign jurisdiction.

And We will give to all the right to take loose salt, according to the old liberty, around the holiday of Saint George for eight days; around the holiday of Saint King Stephen, eight; and around the holiday of the Saint Martin, the same eight days.



Such We also grant the right, outside of those above stated, that no customs officer [tariff collector] will dare impede them neither coming nor going. And the forest, with all that it contains, and all waters, with all their valleys, which are dependent only on the right of donation of the king, We give them to them, so much so the rich as the poor, so that they may use them freely.

We desire, therefore, and decree with Our royal might that no one among Our servants will dare request from the royal majesty a village or a domain, but if someone would request this, they [the community] could resist by the principle of the rights which We have stabilized.

We have declared to Our remembered believers that, if it happens that We come to them in an expedition, they will be debtors of providing only three quarters, and if, in service of the king, the voivode is sent to them or through their country, he will not be without two quarters, one when he arrives and one when he departs.

We add to the above-named rights, that their merchants will be able to depart and return free and without tariff anywhere in Our kingdom, legitimately using their right due to royal majesty.

We declare that all their markets will be held by them without the need for tariffs. And so that what has been said above will remain durable and unchanged in the future, I have strengthened this act with the power of Our double seals. Given in the year of Our Lord one thousand, two hundred, twenty-four, and in Our twenty first year.”

## APPENDIX B

**Kings of Hungary**, beginning with Stephen, to civil war following end of Arpad Dynasty:

- St. Stephen I (1000-1038)
- Peter the Venetian (first rule: 1038-1041)
- Samuel (1041-1044)
- Peter the Venetian (second rule: 1044-1046)
- Andrew I (1046-1060)
- Béla I (1060-1063)
- Solomon (1063-1074)
- Géza I (1074-1077)
- St. Ladislaus I (1077-1095)
- Coloman (1095-1116)
- Stephen II (1116-1131)
- Béla II (1131-1141)
- Géza II (1141-1162) [Beginning of Saxon Colonization]
- Stephen III (1162-1172)
  - Anti-kings during Stephen III's reign: Ladislaus II (1162-1163)  
Stephen IV (1163-1165)
- Béla III (1172-1196)
- Emeric (1196-1204)
- Ladislaus III (1204-1205)
- Andrew II (1205-1235)
- Béla IV (1235-1270)
- Stephen V (1270-1272)
- Ladislaus IV (1272-1290)
- Andrew III (1290-1301)
- Civil war between pretenders (1301-1307)
- Charles Robert crowned for final time, cementing rule (1308)